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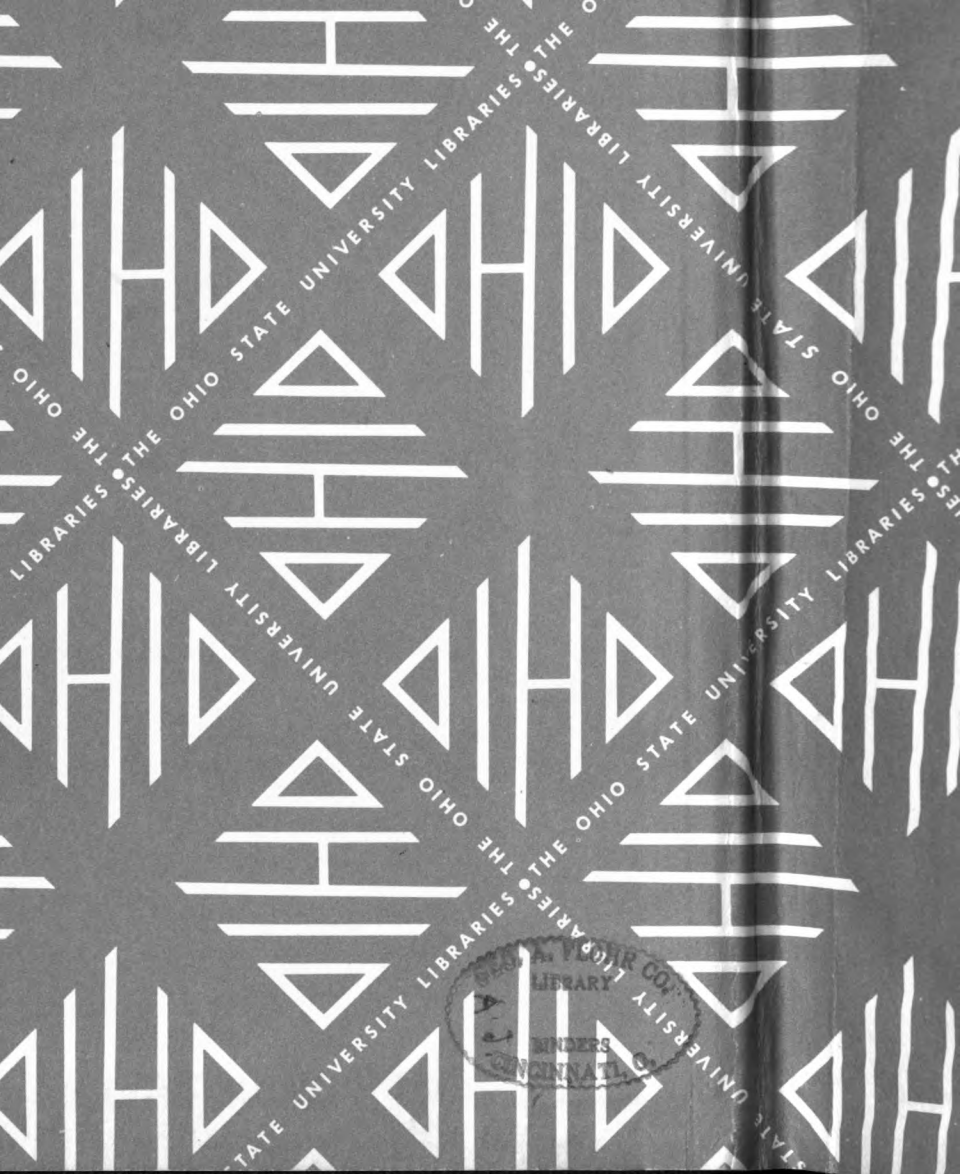

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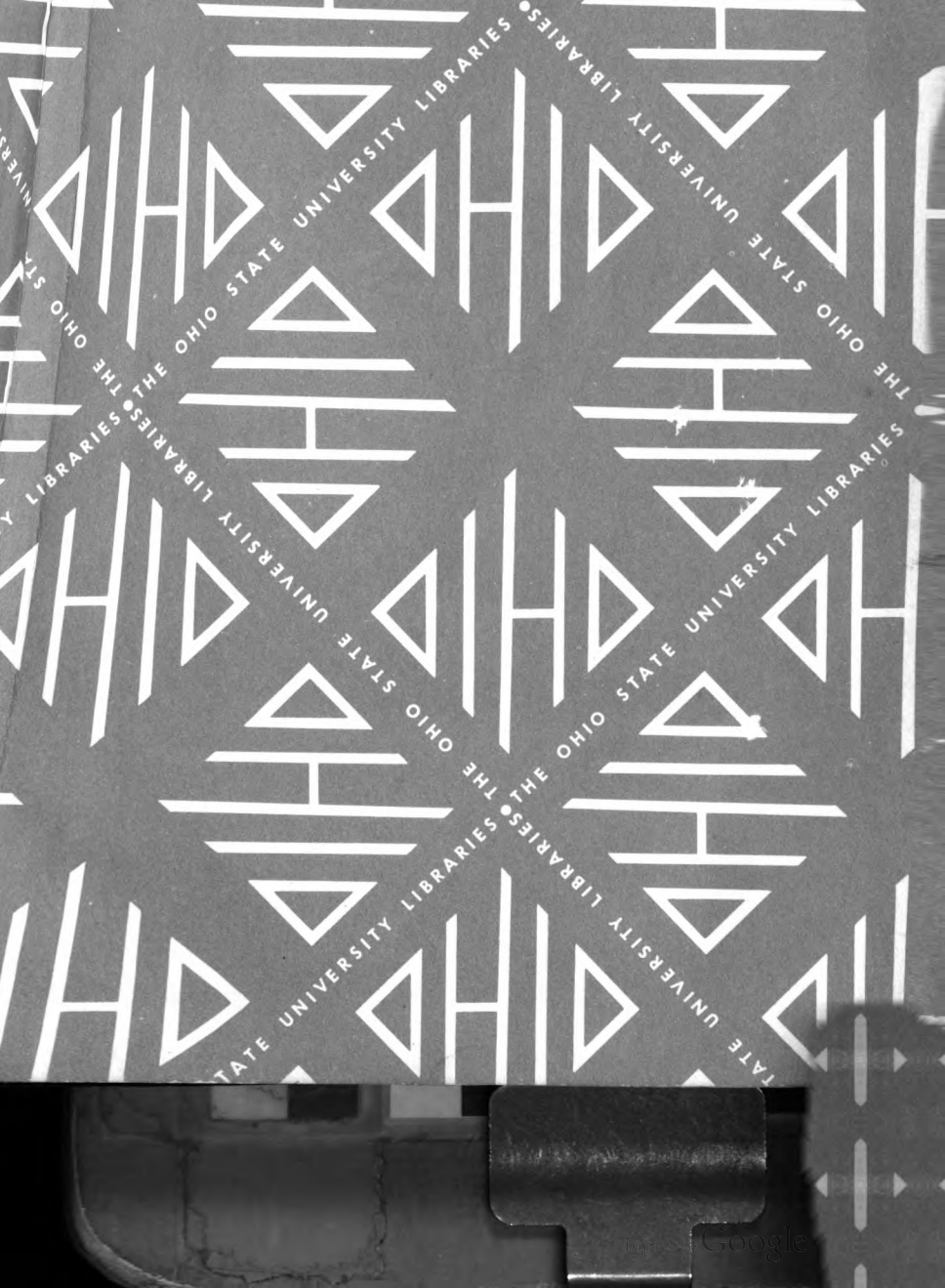
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THE

FABLES OF ÆSOP.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

SAMUEL CROXALL, D.D.

WITH NEW APPLICATIONS, MORALS, ETC.

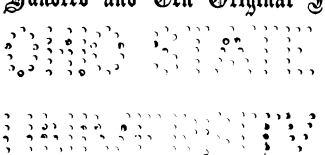
BY THE

REV. GEO. FYLER TOWNSEND,

EDITOR OF "THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS" (REVISED EDITION).

SECOND EDITION.

With One Hundred and Ten Original Illustrations.



LONDON:

FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.,

BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1869.

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BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

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PREFACE.

THE teaching by the use of fables is a very ancient mode of instruction, to be traced in a greater or lesser degree in the early history of all nations. The Greek fable forms a literature of itself, and is marked by its own separate and distinguishing features. It is, in the words of Prof. K. Mueller, "an intentional travestie of human affairs."* The Æsopian fable invariably takes this form. Men are the subjects of it. Human actions, projects, thoughts, follies, and virtues are delineated under the veil and emblems of animals endowed with the faculties of speech and reason. Thus human motives are dissected, human infirmities exposed, and human conduct described, in a method recommending itself to the conscience more forcibly than would the adoption of any definite reproof or any direct condemnation. This, indeed, is the excellency of a fable, that it conveys advice without the appearance of doing so, and

* *History of Greek Literature* (Mueller and Donaldson), vol. i., p. 194.

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thereby saves the self-love of those to whom the counsel it conveys is applicable.

It is not to be supposed that all the fables published under the name of Æsop were written or composed by him. Some learned men have denied to Æsop the authorship of any one of these fables, and have endeavoured to claim for a later writer, Babrius, or for the monk Planudes, the credit of the whole. Dr. Richard Bentley, a famous critic, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Archdeacon of Ely, first attracted * public attention to this theory in his controversy, commenced A.D. 1694, with the Hon. Charles Boyle as to the genuineness of the *Letters of Phalaris*, in which he devotes a chapter to the impugning the title of Æsop to be the author of the fables published under his name. Mr. Thomas Tyrwhitt, an eminent scholar, who resigned, A.D. 1768, the offices of Under Secretary at War and of Clerk to the House of Commons, that he might devote himself entirely to literary pursuits, advocated the same opinions, and published, A.D. 1776, in confirmation of his views, some of the fables of Babrius, from a manuscript found in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Within the last few years this theory has been revived by the discovery of a MS. containing the fables of Babrius, at the Convent of St. Laura, on Mount Athos. This discovery, equalling in importance the restoration of the lost

* Isaac Nevelet published the *Mythologia Æsopica* (Heidelberg, 1610), in which he printed 286 fables, but maintained that they were written by Planudes, and not by Æsop. Father Vavassor and Mr. Bayle maintained the same opinion.

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books of Livy, or the finding of the Syriac Epistles of Ignatius by the late Dr. Cureton, was made by a learned Greek, M. Menoides Menas, commissioned to search for ancient MSS. by M. Villemain, Minister of Public Instruction in France during the reign of Louis Philippe. The newly discovered MS. of Babrius is divided into two series, numbering respectively 130 and 95 fables. They are written in verses, in the choliambic metre, requiring an iambus in the fifth and a spondee in the sixth foot, and contain many fables commonly found in the ordinary collections published under the name of Æsop. These fables have been printed and published in this country under the immediate editorship of a distinguished statesman, the late Right Hon. Sir George Cornewall Lewis. They have since been translated into English verse by the Rev. James Davies, of Moor Court, Herefordshire. This last-named learned scholar supports to its utmost extent the theory of Dr. Bentley, and maintains in the broadest terms "that in any wise the fables of Babrius may claim to be the basis or stock material of all that comes down to our day under the name and credit of Æsop."*

Considerable difference of opinion exists among learned men as to the precise era of Babrius. Mr. Tyrwhitt assigns the earliest date, and thinks it probable that he wrote about the period of the Roman Emperor Augustus.† Sir George Cornewall Lewis gives good reason for supposing

* *The Fables of Babrius.* Translated into English Verse by the Rev. James Davies. Preface, p. xvii.

† Thomas Tyrwhitt, *Dissertatio de Babrio*, p. 3.

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that he was probably a contemporary of a later Emperor, Alexander Severus, A.D. 210.

But long before either of these dates the fame of Æsop as a Greek fabulist was established on a sure foundation, which no subsequent discoveries, nor ingenious theories, nor learned paradoxes, could destroy. Many of his fables are recorded by the poets, historians, and philosophers of repute in ancient Greece and Rome at a period antecedent to the age of either Augustus or Alexander Severus. The fable of the "Eagle and Fox" is alluded to by Aristophanes.* "The Old Man and Death" is generally supposed to be alluded to by Euripides;† "The Ass's Shadow"‡ and "The Wolves and the Sheep" are introduced into his speeches by Demosthenes; "The Horse and the Stag" is related at length by Aristotle;§ "The Belly and the Members" is narrated by Livy in connection with the secession of the plebeians from the Capitol to the Mons Sacer;‖ "The Mountains and the Mouse," "The Town and Country Mouse," "The Sick Lion and Fox," "The Man with Two Bags of Faults," "The Stag and the Horse," "The Frog and the Bull," are immortalized in the Odes, Satires, and Epistles

* Ὅρα νυν ὡς ἐν Αἰσώπου λόγοις, &c., *Aves*, 651; conf. *Vespæ*, 566.

† *Alcestis*, l., 669.

‡ The Scholiast on Plato's *Phædrus* (§ 260, c.) tells the story: Φασὶ δὲ, εἰλκύσθαι τὴν παροιμίαν ἀπὸ τοῦ Δημοσθένει τῳ ῥήτορι συμβάντος· δίκην γάρ ποτε, ὡς φησιν Ἀριστείδης ἀπολογουμενὸς, &c. The passage is too long to quote.

§ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, lib. ii., c. 21.

‖ Livy, lib ii., § 32, and Quinctilian, *De Orat.*, lib. v., c. 19.

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of Horace ;* "The Lark and her Young Ones" is given at length in the *Noctes Atticæ* † of Aulus Gellius. Many of the fables, too, owe their origin to, and were identified with, well-known public events, the issues of which were influenced by the sage counsels contained under his parables and allegories. Thus the affections of the citizens of Athens were conciliated to Pisistratus by the fable of "The Frogs seeking a King from Jupiter." The too great confidence of the inhabitants of Himera in their ruler Phalaris was exposed in the invention of the fable "The Horse and the Stag." On another occasion, the citizens of Samos were cautioned against dismissing a peculating magistrate by the fable of the "Fox and Hedgehog." The fame of Æsop as the author of fables is further established by a long catena of witnesses. Two proverbs are handed down in connection with the events of his history.‡ Herodotus § mentions him by name. Socrates, according to his biographer Plato,‖ relieved the hours of his imprisonment, while awaiting the return of the vessel for the final execution of his sentence, by calling to his mind some of his

* Horace, lib. ii., *Sat.* vi., 80—116; *Ars Poetica*, 139; lib. i., *Ep.* x., 34, 41; lib. i, *Ep.* i., 74, 75; lib. ii., *Sat.* iii., 314.

† Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, lib. ii., c. 29.

‡ "Οὐδ' Αἴσωπον πεπάτηκας," Aristophanes, *Vespæ*, 357; and "Αἰσώπειον αἷμα."

§ Herodotus: *Euterpe*, § cxxxiv. Σύνδουλος δὲ Αἰσώπου τοῦ λογοποιοῦ. . . . ἐπεί τε γὰρ πολλάκις κηρυσσόντων Δελφῶν ἐκ θεοπροπίου "ὃς βούλοιτο ποινὴν τῆς Αἰσώπου ψυχῆς ἀνελέσθαι" ἄλλος μὲν οὐδεὶς ἐφάνη, Ἰάδμονος δὲ παιδὸς παῖς, ἄλλος Ἰάδμων, ἀνείλετο οὕτω καὶ Αἴσωπος Ἰάδμονος ἐγένετο.

‖ Phædo, c. iii, § 3

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fables and by putting them into verse. Aristotle,* in his *Rhetoric*, illustrates his maxims by reference to Æsop; and the Latin orator Quinctilian† defers to his authority as the great master of the rules of criticism. Phædrus, a slave of the Emperor Augustus, gives a poetical version of many of his fables; while the Latin poets Ennius, Horace, Catullus, and Tibullus make frequent allusions to his narratives. Dr. Bentley, by an ingenious argument, seeks to prove, from the erection of a statue to his memory by the Athenians, that his person was free from those blemishes and grotesque deformities attributed to him by his monkish biographer Planudes; but this fact of a statue being erected in the Ἀγορη at Athens may be more legitimately adduced as an additional evidence to secure to Æsop the fame of which Dr. Bentley and his followers would deprive him. If, indeed, Æsop had no existence, and was not a famous writer of fables, the long list of posthumous honours, and the numerous testimonies by so many authors to his vast traditionary fame, present a problem most difficult of solution. The truth, most probably, as in other cases of controversy, lies between the two extremes.‡ Æsop possibly did not

* Aristotle, *Rhet.*, lib. ii., c. 21.

† Quinctilian, *De Orat.*, b. v., c. xi., § 20.

‡ In a similar spirit of extremes, Dr. Bentley is not contented to disprove the ugliness attributed to Æsop, but claims for him the credit of being very handsome: "But I wish that I could do that justice to the memory of our Phrygian to oblige the painters to change their pencil; for it is certain he was no deformed person, and it is probable that he was very handsome."—*Dissertation on the Epistle of Phalaris* (London, 1777), p. 440.

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write,* and certainly did not make, a set collection of his fables. They were spoken as occasion gave rise to them, and were handed down from mouth to mouth; and this best accounts for the infinite diversity in their narration, and, at the same time, for the wonderful substantial agreement apparent under their circumstantial variety. While to Babrius may be due the credit of collecting and giving a permanent form to the fables floating about in the literature of his own and of earlier times, and of seeking to render them more easy of remembrance by clothing them with the charms of verse, there is a sufficiency of evidence in favour of the claims of Æsop, and examples enough of his fables embalmed in ancient authors and interwoven in the records of past history, to demand a modification of those statements which would deny to our author his just honours. At the same time, while justice is done to the earlier fabulist, there is no reason to deny to Babrius his legitimate reputation, of having appreciated, collected, and clothed in verse the specimens of Greek fable to which he could obtain access. Such are a few of the objective arguments and of the external testimonies to

* A learned critic, writing a review of an edition of Æsop's Fables in the *Museum Criticum, or Cambridge Classical Researches* (printed at Cambridge, 1814), vol. i., p. 410, gives this account of these fables:— "The fate of these apologues is somewhat remarkable. Æsop delivered them occasionally by word of mouth. After having been preserved in the memory of several generations, they were collected and committed to writing. Babrius versified them, various persons, as Mr. Smith says in the *Rehearsal*, 'transprosed' the chloliambics of Babrius; and from their collection, Maximus Planudes, or some monk about his time, formed that which usually bears the title of Æsop's Fables."

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be adduced in favour of the existence of Æsop, and of his claims to the gratitude of posterity as the writer of fable.

Something must be said on the subjective side of the question, and on the internal evidences afforded by the fables themselves to their Æsopian origin. All the fables attributed to Æsop by the ancient authors already enumerated are cast in one mould, and bear the impress of one common image and superscription. They are distinguished by the one peculiarity referred to at the commencement of these remarks, viz., that the animals are avowedly introduced as a veil or disguise under which to represent the actions, motives, sentiments, and thoughts of men, to direct whose politics, passions, and opinions is the aim and object of the author. From this circumstance it arises that the Greek fable is free from those popular legendary stories relating to the beasts themselves which abound in the South African* fables which have been lately introduced to the knowledge of students by Dr. Bleeke, and escapes also those strange mythological transmutations which form the substance of Eastern tales† and of most Gentile cosmogonies. The Æsopian fable is further remarkable for its unity of purpose and simplicity of construction. The fiction of the fable is confined to only one incident, and is designed to teach and enforce some one moral, practical, or philosophic truth. All

* *Reynard the Fox in South Africa; or, Hottentot Fables*, by W. H. Bleeke, M.D.

† *History of Greek Literature* (Mueller and Donaldson), vol. i., p. 194.

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the correlative circumstances, as so many different lines converging to the same point, tend to the illustration and development of the one lesson inculcated by the author. Hence these fables stand out in perspicuous contrast with the long and diversified narratives of the Eastern Pilpay, or the ornate mystical legends of the Mahometan Lokman. The clearness, unity, perspicuity, and easy discovery of the moral intended to be taught, are the universal attributes of these early fables, and prove the presence of one master-mind as their originator and constructor. That master was Æsop. He so far advanced before every competitor, that all fables of this type and character are called Æsopic. These fables, in their transmission to modern times, may have been subjected to large additions, to many interpolations, to frequent imitation, to various translations from prose to verse; but "if, under all these changes, still the same story, in its chief circumstances, the same simplicity in telling it, the same humorous turn of thought, and, in a good measure, the same words too, have been preserved, there is enough of Æsop left whereby we may make a true judgment of his spirit, genius, and manner of performance."* There are reasons, then, for believing from internal evidence, no less than from external testimony, that, in the words of the Rev. T. James,† the latest editor of these fables, "we have in the main, both the spirit and the body of Æsop's fables, if not

* Extract from *Dr. Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop examined by the Hon. Charles Boyle* (London, 1678), p. 260.

† *Æsop's Fables*, by the Rev. Thomas James; Introduction.

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as they proceeded from the sage's own lips, at least as they were known in the best times of ancient Greek literature."

The edition of these fables now presented to the public is popularly known as "Croxall's edition." Its original compiler, Dr. Samuel Croxall, Archdeacon of Salop, and Prebendary of Hereford, was a notorious Whig politician, and gave a strenuous support to the Hanoverian succession. He published his first edition of these fables A.D. 1722, and wrote his "Applications" for the purpose of using them as channels of indicating and advancing his political opinions. Sir Roger l'Estrange, a noted Jacobite, had set him the example, by putting forth an edition of Æsop, accompanied by "Reflections" on each fable, written with a view to support his own principles of non-resistance, passive obedience, and attachment to the deposed House of Stuart. Dr. Croxall aims, in his "Applications," to supply an antidote to these (as he believed) pestilent and pernicious sentiments; and hence, in fulfilment of this purpose, deviates into long digressions on matters which are devoid of interest in the present day. Independently of this great drawback, "Croxall's Applications" are jejune, rude, full of obsolete terms, and replete in expressions generally discarded from good society in these days. Many, indeed, are so disconnected, irrelevant, and inapplicable, that if they were placed together in a bag, and drawn out by lot, they would be found to fit one fable quite as well as another. Under these circumstances, the present Editor thought it best to discard altogether Croxall's "Reflections," and to prepare new "Applications,"

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and to add short "Morals" and "Mottoes," which may tend to illustrate the fables. Conscious that many of the fables carried with them their own lessons, his aim has been to make his "Applications" as concise as possible. He has transgressed this rule laid down by himself for his observance in some exceptional cases only; where, for example, as in Fable LXI., "Cupid and Death," and Fable LXXXIII., "The Envious Man and the Covetous," the subject or construction seemed legitimately to justify or to demand a more ample and discursive explanation. The Editor has borne another purpose on his mind in the preparation of these "Applications." A believer in the efficacy and value of proverbs,—convinced of the truth of the language of Lord Bacon, "Proverbs certainly are of excellent use; they are *mucrones verborum*—pointed speeches; they serve to be interlaced in continual speech; they serve upon particular occasions, if you take out the kernel of them, and make them your own,"—he has explained the fable by the introduction, as often as opportunity allowed, of a good English proverb. The "Mottoes" are of inferior importance. They have been made, as far as possible, to coincide with and to confirm the moral of the fable; and are given in every instance in a poetical form, that they may be the more easily remembered. It has been deemed best by the Publishers to leave the text of Croxall untouched, as frequent republication has, in spite of its faults, rendered it familiar to the public.*

* It may be worthy of remark, that the fables of Æsop were among the earliest books brought into general circulation at the resto-

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The Publishers have spared no pains nor cost in their preparation of this volume. It is to be hoped that the new Applications, Morals, and Mottoes may unite with the excellent type, beautiful engravings, and convenient size of this work to render it a popular edition of Æsop, and to promote a larger acquaintance with, and a heartier appreciation of, the profound truths, sound wisdom, and ripe experience contained in these admirable fables.

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ration of learning in the age immediately preceding the Reformation. Erasmus published more than one edition of these Fables, and Martin Luther was so fond of them, that we find the authority of Sir James Stephen (*Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*) for asserting, "Æsop lay on the same table with the Book of Psalms, and the two translations proceeded alternately. Except the Bible, he (Martin Luther) declared that he knew no better book, and pronounced it not to be the work of any single author, but the fruit of the labours of the greatest minds in all ages."

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THE LIFE OF ÆSOP.

VERY little is known about Æsop. Two accounts of him have been published: the one, written by Maximus Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, in the fourteenth century; and the other by M. Bachet de Mezeriac,* a learned Frenchman, who lived and wrote during the reign of our James I. The first of these "Lives" was the most popular, and had the largest circulation. A translation of it was for many years prefixed to Archdeacon Croxall's English edition of Æsop's Fables. It is, however, such a mixture of anachronisms, legends, fictions, absurd stories, and manifest improbabilities, that it is universally given up as unworthy of credit. The second of these "Lives" is the source from which the following brief memoir is composed.

Æsop† is acknowledged by the concurrent testimony

* Claude Gaspard Bachet de Mezeriac, born at Bourg A.D. 1581, was a Jesuit student in his youth, and leaving that society before he took the vows, married. He was appointed tutor to Louis XIII. of France, but declined the honourable office. He published a translation of Ovid in verse, a Life of Æsop, and several other works.

† The personal appearance of Æsop has been a subject of grave dispute. In the Life attributed to Maximus Planudes, he is described as being of the most deformed, grotesque, and ugly figure,—while, on the other hand, Dr. Richard Bentley and other learned critics have

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of all who have written about him, to have been by birth a slave. The exact place of his birth is unknown. M. Bachet de Mezeriac makes him to have been born at Cotyæon, a city of Phrygia; while, according to Professor K. O. Mueller,* the latest writer on the subject, he was a native of the Thracian city, Mesembria. His masters, famous only for their connection with Æsop, were Xanthus and Jadmon, both inhabitants of the island of Samos. Under the latter of these he was admitted to the honours of a freed-man, and became, by his wit, tact, ability, and judgment, the companion of kings and the associate of philosophers. He is related to have made Sardis his chief place of residence about the time of the fifty-second Olympiad, 570 B.C., on the express invitation of the celebrated Crœsus, king of Lydia. In this, one of the most civilized courts then existing on the earth, and connected by its diplomacy with the various states and settlements of Greece, Æsop made the acquaintance of the most learned men of the age, who were attracted by the fame of its royal master, and by the patronage shown by him to arts and learning. Among the number of these visitors to the court of Crœsus was Solon, reputed to be one of the seven wise men of Greece. Plutarch relates a

given very good reasons for the rejection of this opinion. His name is variously derived. Some would make it synonymous with Æthiops, from his dark complexion. M. Bachet de Mezeriac gives this derivation: *αιθω, αισω*—fut. prim. *to burn; ωψ—face*,—a man with bright, sparkling, witty eyes.

* See *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece* (Mueller and Donaldson), vol. i., p. 194.

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memorable interview between the monarch and the philosopher, at which Æsop was present. Crœsus having shown his learned guest the magnificence of his palace, and the vast riches accumulated from his extensive dominions, desired him to name the happiest person he had known. Solon, in his reply to the monarch, exhibited a perversity which savoured of affectation. He gave, in the first place, the palm of happiness to Tellus, an Athenian, remarkable for his poverty, for his good training of his children, and for the loss of his life while fighting for his country. On being further pressed by Crœsus, he next named Cleobis and Biton, the two sons of the priestess of Juno at Argos, who, harnessing themselves to their mother's chariot, drew her to the temple, and who, on her asking some reward for them from Juno for their piety, were both found dead next morning within the temple. Æsop, perceiving that the bluntness of the philosopher was displeasing to his master, said, "For my part, I am persuaded that Crœsus hath as much the pre-eminence in happiness over all other men as the sea hath over all rivers." Crœsus was so pleased at this answer that he exclaimed, in a sentence which has since become a proverb, μᾶλλον ὁ φρυξ—"The Phrygian has hit the mark, and spoken better than all." Subsequently, in conversation with Solon, Æsop endeavoured to persuade him that he would gain more attention from sovereigns to his counsels, if he would impart them in a more conciliatory and respectful spirit.

Æsop, though an accomplished courtier, and accustomed to "crook the pregnant hinges of his knees" before an Eastern ruler, was no mere flatterer. Concentrating in

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himself the humour of the wit and the wisdom of the philosopher, he was probably at once "a fellow of infinite jest and most excellent fancy," and "full of wise saws and modern instances;" and he conveyed to his master, under the veil of his admirable fables, more solemn counsels, well-considered advice, and valuable truths, than he would derive from the wordy disputations of sages and sophists. He was, indeed, so much esteemed by Crœsus, that he employed him in his communications with the respective States of Greece on several important occasions demanding the exercise of tact, judgment, and the arts of diplomacy. On one of these occasions he was present at Athens, and conciliated the affections of the citizens towards their ruler Pisistratus by the narration of his fable of "The Frogs desiring a King." On another occasion, when at Corinth, he warned the inhabitants of that city against being led away by the temporary impulses of the multitude, in a fable illustrative of the dangers of mob-law. He met his death in the discharge of one of these important political missions. Sent by Crœsus to the city of Delphi on a solemn embassy, he was entrusted with the duty of offering costly gifts at the shrine of Apollo, and of distributing to each citizen a present of four minæ of silver.* In the course of the negotiations, differences of opinion, leading to bitter mutual exasperations, arose between himself and the citizens. These proceeded to such an extent, that he refused to distribute the funds committed to his care, and sent them back to Crœsus. The citizens of Delphi determined to revenge this affront. In order to find a

* The mina of silver was 12 ounces, or about £3 sterling.

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matter of accusation against Æsop, they secreted a valuable gold cup belonging to the temple, among the baggage of his attendants, and compelled him to return to the city to defend himself on a charge of sacrilege. In vain did Æsop entreat their patience, and resort to his most moving fables* to soften their displeasure. Too angry to listen to reason, they condemned him to die, and executed their cruel sentence by casting him headlong from a rocky precipice adjoining their city.

The death of Æsop did not pass unrevenged. The inhabitants of Delphi were involved in a series of calamities, from which they were not delivered until they had paid a fine (voluntarily imposed on themselves as an acknowledgment of their deed of guilt) to the grandson of Jadmon, the former master of Æsop. So notorious, indeed, was the reparation thus made by the citizens of Delphi, that it gave rise to a proverb—"Æsop's blood," which was henceforth used in confirmation of the truth that the crime of murder will not go unpunished.

* Æsop related on this occasion the fable of the Beetle and the Eagle. As it is not contained in this selection, the Editor transcribes it. "The Eagle and the Beetle were at enmity together. The Eagle having seized and eaten up the young ones of the Beetle, and so given the first provocation, the Beetle got by stealth at the Eagle's eggs and rolled them out of the nest. The Eagle made his complaint to Jupiter, who ordered him to place his nest in his lap. The Beetle, on discovering this, came buzzing about him, till Jupiter, rising up unawares to drive him away from his head, threw down the eggs and broke them." The moral of the fable is plain enough. Æsop sought to impress upon the citizens of Delphi, that their cruel conduct towards him would not pass unavenged.

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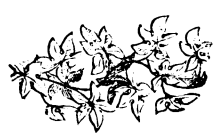
The Athenians, two hundred years later, showed their admiration of Æsop by dedicating a statue to his honour in their public place of meeting, executed by Lysippus, one of the most famous of their sculptors. These scanty records * supply all the information that can be relied on relative to the history of one who has for many successive generations tended to promote, by his admirable fables, the happiness, amelioration, and instruction of mankind.

* Several curious sayings are attributed to Æsop, among which is the remark, "That when Prometheus made man, he tempered the earth from which he was created, not with water, but with tears."



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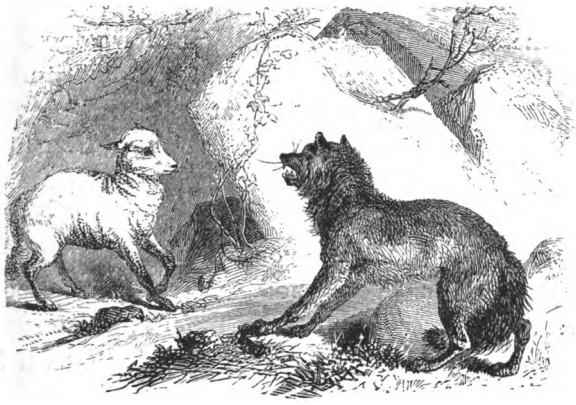

FABLE I.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

ONE hot, sultry day, a Wolf and a Lamb happened to come, just at the same time, to quench their thirst in the stream of a clear silver brook that ran tumbling down the side of a rocky mountain. The Wolf stood upon the higher ground, and the Lamb at some distance from him down the current. However, the Wolf, having a mind to pick a quarrel with him asked him what he meant by disturbing the water, and making it so muddy that he could not drink, and, at the same time, demanded satisfaction. The Lamb, frightened at this threatening charge, told him, in a tone as mild as possible, that, with humble submission, he could not conceive how that could be,

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since the water which he drank ran down from the Wolf to him, and therefore it could not be disturbed so far up the stream. "Be that as it will," replies the Wolf, "you are a rascal, and I have been told that you treated me with ill language behind my back, about half a year ago."—"Upon my word," says the Lamb, "the time you mention was before I was born." The Wolf, finding it to no purpose to argue any longer against truth, fell into a great passion, snarling and foaming at the mouth, as if he had been mad; and drawing nearer to the Lamb, "Sirrah," says he, "if it was not you, it was your father, and that is all one." So he seized the poor innocent, helpless thing, tore it to pieces, and made a meal of it.

MORAL. The wicked man will always find an excuse for evil-doing.

APPLICATION. A tyrant, whether he be a sovereign on his throne, or a boy at school, or the elected ruler of a republic, will never want a plea for his misconduct. The ill-disposed will easily invent a cause for dispute when he intends to do an injury. Beware of quarrelsome or tyrannical companions; with such, you play with edge-tools.

Forgiveness to the injured doth belong;
They never pardon who have done the wrong.

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FABLE II.

THE LION AND THE FOUR BULLS.

FOUR Bulls in the same field kept always near one another, and fed together. A Lion often saw them, and desired very much to make them his prey; but though he could easily have fallen upon any one of them singly, he was afraid to attack any of them as long as they kept together, knowing that they would have conquered him. He therefore contented himself with looking on them at a safe distance. He thought, however, of some plan by which he might divide them, and determined to try, by unkind whispers and malicious hints, repeated as if said of the one by the other, to foment jealousies and disunion among them.

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This stratagem succeeded so well that the Bulls grew cold and reserved towards each other, and finally separated. No sooner did the Lion see that they fed each one by himself apart, than he fell upon them singly, and devoured every Bull of them, one after another.

MORAL. Union is strength.

APPLICATION. A kingdom or a house divided against itself cannot stand. In all human societies, whether they consist of large states, or are divided into private families, union is the sole secret of strength. War itself, however it may shock the feelings of humanity, is not an unmixed evil, as, by its means, the life of a nation is quickened, and the necessity of union enforced. It has been observed by an eminent political writer, that without the rivalship of nations, and the possibility of war, civil society could scarcely have found an object or a form; and that we should in vain expect to give to any community a sense of union among themselves, unless the impulse to unite was assisted by the operation of foreign hostility. War is the great promoter of social combination. The selfishness of individuals is suppressed in the anxiety to strengthen the united efforts of a people for their general protection; and the public spirit of a nation, weak and inefficient while

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produced only by the kindly sympathies of our nature, is excited to its utmost energy when under the necessity of resisting external enemies.

In private life, the intimacy of friends and companions forms the great charm of the domestic circle; and if we would preserve our friendships, we must take care that they are neither broken by false rumours, nor impaired by the idle reports of whisperers and tale-bearers.

> The nation, like the man, who would be free,
> Must merit first the right of liberty.

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FABLE III.

THE FROG AND THE FOX.

A FROG leaping out of a pond, and placing himself on its bank, made proclamation to all the beasts of the forest that he was a skilful physician, and could cure all manner of diseases. This discourse, uttered in a learned jargon of hard and cramped words, which nobody understood, made the beasts admire his learning, and give credit to his vauntings. At last the Fox asked him, with much indignation, how he, with his thin lantern jaws, speckled skin, and disfigured body, could set up for one able to cure the infirmities of others.

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MORAL.. Physician, heal thyself.

APPLICATION. We should not attempt to correct in others the faults peculiar to ourselves. They whose eyes want couching are the most improper people in the world to set up for oculists.

He's wise who leaves his neighbour's faults alone,
And tries his talent to correct his own.

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FABLE IV.

THE ASS EATING THISTLES.

AN Ass was loaded with good provisions of several sorts, which, in time of harvest, he was carrying into the field for his master and the reapers to dine upon. By the way he met with a fine large Thistle, and being very hungry, began to mumble it; which while he was doing, he entered into this reflection: "How many greedy epicures would think themselves happy, amidst such a variety of delicate viands as I now carry! But to me this prickly Thistle is more savoury and relishing than the most exquisite and sumptuous banquet."

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MORAL. That which is one man's meat is another man's poison.

APPLICATION. The tastes of men, women, and children are as widely different as the height of their stature, the colour of their hair, or the variety of their complexion; and it were as wise to expect a uniformity in the one as in the other; yet how often do we find persons setting up their own particular likings or dislikings as the only rule of propriety, and expressing a childish wonder at people for not estimating things exactly after the same fashion as themselves! This great fault, which frequently leads to rude remarks and uncalled-for interference, is rebuked in this fable.

Men's judgments, as their watches, disagree. None
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.

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FABLE V.

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

A LARK, who had Young Ones in a field of corn which was almost ripe, was under some fear lest the reapers should come to reap it before her young brood were fledged, and able to remove from their nest: wherefore, upon flying abroad to look for food, she left this charge with them—that they should take notice what they heard talked of in her absence, and tell her of it when she came back again. When she was gone, they heard the owner of the corn call to his son—"Well," says he, "I think this corn is ripe enough; I would have you go early to-morrow, and desire our friends and neighbours to come and help us to reap it." When the Old Lark came home,

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the Young Ones fell a-quivering and chirping round her, and told her what had happened, begging her to remove them as fast as she could. The mother bade them be easy; "for," says she, "if the owner depends upon friends and neighbours, I am pretty sure the corn will not be reaped to-morrow." Next day she went out again, upon the same occasion, and left the same orders with them as before. The owner came, and stayed, expecting those he had sent to: but the sun grew hot, and nothing was done, for not a soul came to help him. "Then," says he to his son, "I perceive these friends of ours are not to be depended upon; so that you must even go to your uncles and cousins, and tell them I desire they would be here betimes to-morrow morning to help us to reap." Well, this the Young Ones, in a great fright, reported also to their mother. "If that be all," says she, "do not be frightened, children; for kindred and relations do not use to be so very forward to serve one another: but take particular notice what you hear said the next time, and be sure you let me know it." She went abroad the next day, as usual; and the owner, finding his relations as slack as the rest of his neighbours, said to his son, "Hark ye, George, do you get a couple of good sickles ready against to-morrow morning, and we will even reap the corn ourselves." When the Young Ones told their mother this, "Then," says she, "we must be

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gone indeed; for when a man undertakes to do his work himself, he will not be disappointed." So she removed her Young Ones immediately, and the corn was reaped the next day by the good man and his son.

MORAL. He who would have things well done must do them himself.

APPLICATION. This fable inculcates the duty of self-reliance. The proverb says, "The soil on a farmer's shoe is the most fertile soil on his farm." Never depend upon the assistance of friends and relations in anything which you are able to do yourself.

Neighbours and friends are backward. Who intends
T'effect things well, must make his hands his friends.

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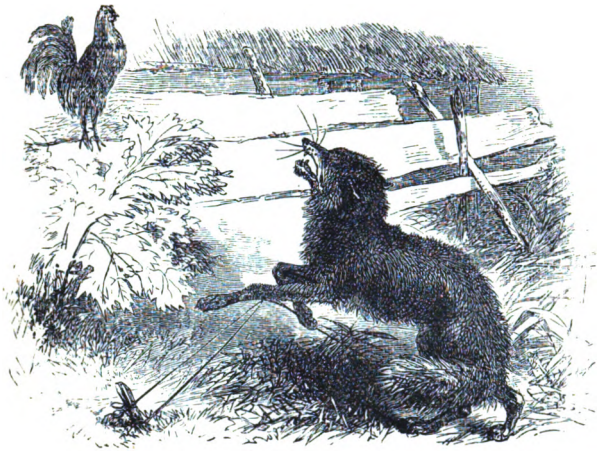

FABLE VI.

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

THE Fox, passing early one summer morning near a farmyard, was caught in a trap, which had been set for that very purpose. The Cock, from a distance, saw what happened; and, hardly daring to trust himself near so dangerous a foe, approached him cautiously, and peeped at him, not without some horror and dread of mind. Reynard no sooner perceived him, but he addressed him, with all the designing artifice imaginable. "Dear cousin," says he, "you see what an unfortunate accident has befallen me here, and all upon your account: for, as I was creeping through yonder hedge, in my way home-

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ward, I heard you crow, and was resolved to ask you how you did before I went any farther: but by the way I met with this disaster; and therefore now I must become an humble suitor to you for a knife to cut this string; or, at least, that you would conceal my misfortune till I have gnawed it asunder with my teeth." The Cock, seeing how the case stood, made no reply, but flew away as fast as he could, and gave the farmer an account of the whole matter; who, taking a good weapon along with him, came and destroyed the Fox before he had time to escape.

MORAL. Use discrimination in your charities.

APPLICATION. The relief of the distresses of our fellow-creatures affords to the humane mind the most pleasurable sensations. Many charitable persons give to every applicant for their alms, and thereby frequently encourage idleness and imposture. The truly conscientious man will give himself the trouble of inquiring into the truth of the distresses which he relieves, and with a willingness to give will unite a care that his charities are bestowed on worthy objects.

In faith and hope the world will disagree;
But all mankind's concern is charity.

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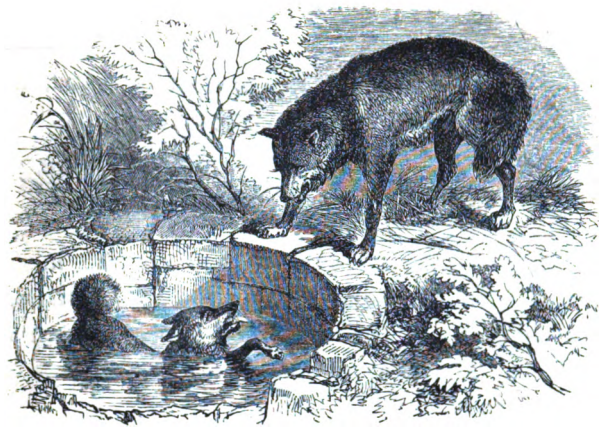

FABLE VII.

THE FOX IN THE WELL.

A Fox, having fallen into a Well, made a shift, by sticking his claws into the sides, to keep his head above water. Soon after, a Wolf came and peeped over the brink, to whom the Fox applied himself very earnestly for assistance, entreating that he would help him to a rope, which might favour his escape. The Wolf, moved with compassion at his misfortune, thus expressed his concern: "Ah, poor Reynard!" says he; "I am sorry for you with all my heart. How could you possibly come into this melancholy plight?" —"Nay, prithee, friend," replies the Fox, "if you wish me well, do not stand pitying me, but lend me some succour as fast as you can; for pity is but cold

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comfort when one is up to the chin in water, and within a hair's breadth of starving or drowning."

MORAL. A friend is tried in adversity.

APPLICATION. To express pity for the misfortunes of friends, without an effort to relieve them, is sorry comfort. A friend, like a brother, is born for adversity. The hour of misfortune is the best test of true friendship;

> For friendship, of itself a holy tie,
> Is made more sacred by adversity.

Real friends, says a Greek philosopher, are wont to visit us in our prosperity only when invited, but in adversity to come of their own accord. Fair words are good things, kind deeds are better.

> For Heaven's eternal wisdom has decreed
> That man of man should ever stand in need.

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FABLE VIII.

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

THE Wolves and the Sheep had been a long time in a state of war together. At last a cessation of arms was proposed, in order to a treaty of peace, and hostages were to be delivered on both sides for security. The Wolves proposed that the sheep should give up their dogs, on the one side, and that they would deliver up their young ones, on the other. This proposal was agreed to, but no sooner executed, than the young Wolves began to howl for want of their dams. The old ones took this opportunity to cry out that the treaty was broken; and so falling upon the Sheep, who were destitute of their faithful

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guardians the dogs, they worried and devoured them at their pleasure.

MORAL Good watch prevents harm.

APPLICATION. The statement of an historical fact will best illustrate the meaning of this fable. When Philip, king of Macedon, applied to the Athenians to deliver up to him Demosthenes, as the enemy to his ambitious designs, the orator obtained the refusal of his countrymen to the demand by relating to them, in their public assembly, this fable. He thus warned them that, in giving up the public orators, they surrendered the watch-dogs of the state. The vigilance, example, and public spirit of the chief citizens, willing alike to resist the encroachments of the Crown and to restrain the madness of the people, are necessary to the well-being of a nation. The fable teaches the expediency of maintaining those laws and securities which the wisdom of former ages has constructed for the preservation and good government of society.

Example is a living law, whose sway
Men more than all written laws obey.

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FABLE IX.

THE EAGLE AND THE FOX.

AN Eagle that had young ones, looking out for something to feed them with, happened to spy a Fox's cub that lay basking itself abroad in the sun. She made a swoop, and seized it; but before she had carried it quite off, the old Fox, coming home, implored her, with tears in her eyes, to spare her cub, and pity the distress of a poor fond mother, to whom no affliction could be so great as that of losing her child. The Eagle, whose nest was up in a very high tree, thought herself secure enough from all projects of revenge, and so bore away the cub to her young ones, without showing any regard to the supplications

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of the Fox. But that subtle creature, highly incensed at this outrage, ran to an altar, where some country people had been sacrificing a kid in the open fields, and catching up a firebrand in her mouth, made towards the tree where the Eagle's nest was, with a resolution of revenge. She had scarce ascended the first branches, when the Eagle, terrified with the approaching ruin of herself and family, begged of the Fox to desist, and, with much submission, returned her the cub again safe and sound.

MORAL. Measure for measure.

APPLICATION. "The smallest worm will turn, being trodden on." The most quiet and timid natures may, by continued oppression and ill-treatment, be goaded and exasperated into efforts at retaliation and revenge. It is a truth universally acknowledged, and confirmed by innumerable examples, that sooner or later punishment overtakes the wrong-doer. The oppressors, when, like the Eagle in the fable, they think themselves quite safe, may be at that moment most near to their shame, discovery, and retribution.

Trample not on the meanest, since e'en they
May that assault with just revenge repay.

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FABLE X.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A WOLF, clothing himself in the skin of a Sheep, and by this means getting in among the flock, took the opportunity to devour many of them. At last the shepherd discovered him, and, fastening a rope about his neck, tied him up to a tree which stood hard by. Some other shepherds happening to pass that way, and observing what he was about, drew near, and expressed their surprise at it. "What," says one of them, "brother, do you hang sheep?"—"No," replies the other, "but I hang a Wolf whenever I catch him, though he be in Sheep's clothing." Then he showed

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them their mistake, and they applauded the justice of the execution.

MORAL. The credit got by a lie only lasts till the truth comes out.

APPLICATION. He adds to his fault who would conceal it by hypocrisy. The exposure of the hypocrite meets with a universal approbation. "It is better," says a Spanish proverb, "to eat grass and thistles, than to have a hood over the face." Better any condition, however humble, than riches or prosperity gained at the sacrifice of truth.

Truth has such a face and such a mien
As, to be loved, needs only to be seen.

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FABLE XI.

THE FOWLER AND THE RINGDOVE.

A FOWLER went into the woods to shoot. He soon spied a Ringdove among the branches of an oak, and purposed to kill it. He put an arrow to his bow, and was just on the point of letting it fly, when an adder, which he had trod upon under the grass, stung him so painfully in the leg, that he was forced to quit his design. The poison immediately infected his blood, and his whole body began to mortify; which when he perceived, he could not help owning it to be just. "Fate," says he, "has brought destruction upon me while I was contriving the death of another."

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MORAL. He that mischief hatcheth,
Mischief always catcheth.

APPLICATION. No one more justly merits a misfortune than he who designs an injury to another. If a man plots mischief against an innocent neighbour, and incurs himself a like calamity, his conscience will do its part, and cause him to acknowledge the justice and righteousness of the retribution.

For oft those ills that we for others spread,
Upon ourselves by equal fate are shed.

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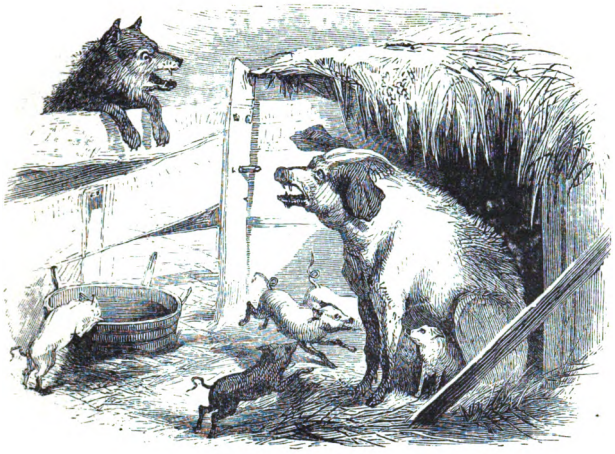

FABLE XII.

THE SOW AND THE WOLF.

A Sow had just farrowed, and lay in the sty, with her whole litter of pigs about her. A Wolf, who secretly longed to make a meal of one of them, but knew not how to compass it, endeavoured to insinuate himself into the Sow's good opinion; and, accordingly, coming up to her—"How does the good woman do to-day?" says he. "Can I be of any service to you, Mrs. Sow, in relation to your little family here? If you have a mind to go abroad, and air yourself a little or so, you may depend upon it I will take as much care of your little pigs as you could do yourself."—"Your humble servant," says the Sow, "I thoroughly understand your meaning; and, to let you

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know I do, I must be so free as to tell you I had rather have your room than your company; and, therefore, if you would act like a Wolf of honour, and oblige me, I beg I may never see your face again."

MORAL. Services proffered by strangers are to be suspected.

APPLICATION. The open, unsuspecting disposition of youth is often betrayed into accepting the services of strangers, who prove in the end to have had a self-interested motive in their civilities. The person most worth knowing is not the most forward in making himself known. The Scotch proverb says, "Before you make a friend, eat a peck of salt with him." M. Le Sage, the French moralist, gives this advice: "Soyez desormais en garde contre les louanges; défiez vous des gens que vous ne connoitrez point."

Candid and generous and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust—
An error soon corrected;
For who but learns in riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

Everything that fair doth show,
When proof is made, proves not so.

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FABLE XIII.

THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

THE Horse, adorned with his great war saddle, and champing his foaming bridle, came thundering along the way, and made the mountains echo with his loud, shrill neighing. He had not gone far before he overtook an Ass, who was labouring under a heavy burden, and moving slowly on in the same track with himself. Immediately he called out to him, in a haughty, imperious tone, and threatened to trample him in the dirt, if he did not give the way to him. The poor, patient Ass, not daring to dispute the matter, quietly got out of his way as fast as he could, and let him go by. Not long after this, the same Horse, in an engagement with the enemy, happened to be shot in the

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eye, which rendered him unfit to be a charger; so he was stripped of his fine trappings, and sold to a carrier. The Ass, meeting him in this forlorn condition, thought that now it was his time to insult; and so says he, "Heyday, friend, is it you? Well, I always believed that pride of yours would one day have a fall."

MORAL. Pride goes before; shame follows after.

APPLICATION. Pride, of all sentiments, is the one most inconsistent with a just appreciation of the real condition of humanity. In persons of high or of low degree it is equally repulsive, and consequently the proud man in his fall meets neither with sympathy nor commiseration.

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment and misguided mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.

An ape's an ape, a varlet's a varlet,
Though he be clad in silk or scarlet.

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FABLE XIV.

THE WOLF, THE LAMB, AND THE GOAT.

A WOLF, seeing a Lamb one day nursed by a Goat, exclaimed, "Child, you are mistaken; this is not your mother; she is yonder," pointing to a flock of sheep at a distance. "It may be so," says the Lamb; "the person you name may be my mother; but I look upon this charitable Goat in that relation, as she has taken a mother's care of me, and stinted her own kids that I might not want. I owe her a child's duty, as from her alone I have received all the nursing and kindness which hath hitherto supported me in life."

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MORAL. He that does not provide for his own is worse than an infidel.

APPLICATION. Circumstances may arise when children may be indebted to strangers for the kindly offices ordinarily provided by their parents, in which case the children owe to their benefactors a gratitude, affection, and allegiance commensurate with the benefits conferred on them. Love, says the proverb, can neither be bought nor sold ; its only price is love.

The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love.

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FABLE XV.

THE KITE AND THE PIGEONS.

A KITE, who had kept sailing in the air for many days near a dovehouse, and made a swoop at several Pigeons, but all to no purpose (for they were too nimble for him), at last had recourse to stratagem, and took his opportunity one day to make a declaration to them, in which he set forth his own just and good intentions, who had nothing more at heart than the defence and protection of the Pigeons in their ancient rights and liberties, and how concerned he was at their fears and jealousies of a foreign invasion, especially their unjust and unreasonable suspicions of himself, as if he intended by force of arms to break

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in upon their constitution, and erect a tyrannical government over them. To prevent all which, and thoroughly to quiet their minds, he thought proper to propose to them such terms of alliance and articles of peace as might for ever cement a good understanding betwixt them: the principal of which was, that they should accept him for their king, and invest him with all kingly privilege and prerogative over them. The poor, simple Pigeons consented. The Kite took the coronation oath, after a very solemn manner, on his part; and the Doves, the oaths of allegiance and fidelity, on theirs. But much time had not passed over their heads before the Kite pretended that it was part of his prerogative to devour a Pigeon whenever he pleased. And this he was not contented to do himself only, but instructed the rest of the royal family in the same kingly arts of government. The Pigeons, reduced to this miserable condition, said one to the other, "Ah! we deserve no better! Why did we let him come in?"

MORAL. If you trust before you try,
You may repent before you die.

APPLICATION. How often do men bring the calamities of life upon themselves! They make a wrong choice in a profession, or in a friend; or incur uncalled-for liabilities on the assurances of persons

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whose later conduct proves them to be unworthy of confidence, and hence bring misery and disaster on themselves. He who is willing to be deceived will be deceived. Sudden trust brings sudden repentance.

Whoever trusteth ere he know,
Doth hurt himself and please his foe.

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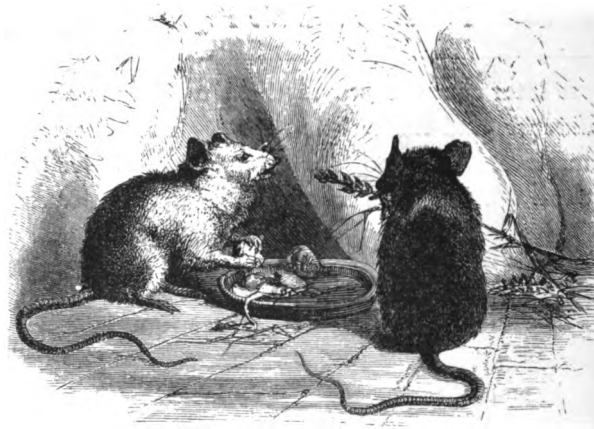

FABLE XVI.

THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE CITY MOUSE.

AN honest, plain, sensible Country Mouse is said to have entertained at his hole one day a fine Mouse of the Town. Having formerly been playfellows together, they were old acquaintance, which served as an apology for the visit. However, as master of the house, he thought himself obliged to do the honours of it in all respects, and to promote the comfort of his guest as much as he possibly could. In order to this, he set before him a supply of delicate gray peas and bacon, a dish of fine oat-meal, some parings of new cheese, and, to crown all, a remnant of a charming mellow apple for dessert.

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In good manners, he forbore to eat any himself, lest his visitor should not have enough; but that he might seem to bear him company, sat and nibbled a piece of a wheaten straw very busily. At last says the Citizen of the Town, "Old friend, give me leave to be a little free with you: how can you bear to live in this nasty, dirty, melancholy hole here, with nothing but woods, and meadows, and mountains, and rivulets about you? Do not you prefer the conversation of the world to the chirping of birds, and the splendour of a court to the rude aspect of the country? Come, take my word for it, you will find it a change for the better. Never stand considering, but away this moment. Remember, we are older than we were, and therefore have no time to lose. Make sure of to-day, and spend it as agreeably as you can; you know not what may happen to-morrow." In short, these and such like arguments prevailed, and his Country Acquaintance was resolved to go to town that night. So they both set out upon their journey together, proposing to sneak in after the close of the evening. They did so; and about midnight, made their entry into a certain great house, where there had been an extraordinary entertainment during the evening, and several titbits were still lying on the floor. The Country Guest was immediately placed in the midst of a rich Persian carpet: and now it was the Courtier's turn

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to entertain; who, indeed, acquitted himself in that capacity with the utmost readiness and address, changing the courses as elegantly, and tasting every thing first as judiciously, as any clerk of a kitchen. The other sat and enjoyed himself like a delighted epicure, tickled to the last degree with this new turn of his affairs; when, on a sudden, a noise of somebody opening the door made them start from their seats, and hurry-scurry in confusion about the dining-room. Our Country Friend, in particular, was ready to die with fear at the barking of a huge mastiff, which sounded through the whole house. At last, recovering himself,—"Well," says he, "if this be your town life, much good may it do you! I shall return as fast as I can to my poor, quiet hole, with my homely but comfortable gray peas.

Give me again my hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty."

MORAL. Better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.

APPLICATION. It is neither unlawful now inexpedient to endeavour to improve our condition in life. On the contrary, an endeavour to rise, founded on honourable exertion, is consistent with a spirit of contentment, and with gratitude for present blessings. There exists, however, a class of persons at all times who are never contented with their station

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or circumstances, and who are constantly dissatisfied at not being higher or wealthier than they are. Such discontent is a man's worst evil. This fable teaches that contentment is great gain.

Seldom it comes, to few from heaven sent,
That much in little—all in naught—content.

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FABLE XVII.

THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

A FARMER was sowing his field with flax. The Swallow observed it, and desired the other Birds to assist her in picking the seed up and destroying it, telling them that flax was that pernicious material of which the thread was composed which made the fowler's nets, and by that means contributed to the ruin of so many innocent Birds. But the poor Swallow not having the good fortune to be regarded, the flax sprang up, and appeared above the ground. She then put them in mind once more of their impending danger, and wished them to pluck it up in the bud, before it went any further. They still neglected her warning, and the flax grew up into

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the high stalk. She yet again desired them to attack it, for that it was not yet too late. But all that she could get was to be ridiculed and despised for a silly, pretending prophet. The Swallow, finding all her remonstrances availed nothing, was resolved to leave the society of such unthinking, careless creatures, before the hemp was woven into nets for their destruction. So, quitting the woods, and forsaking the conversation of the Birds, she has ever since made her abode among the dwellings of men.

MORAL. Prevention is better than cure.

APPLICATION. The black cloud of misfortune in many cases, casts its shadows before; yet men shut their eyes to the threatened danger, and pursue their own course till the possibility of prevention has passed away. They who have no foresight of their own, or who despise the wholesome advice of friends deserve to suffer the consequences of their folly, obstinacy, or want of oversight. He that will not be counselled cannot be helped. To fear all is to cure all.

Afterwits are dearly bought;
Let thy forewit guide thy thought.

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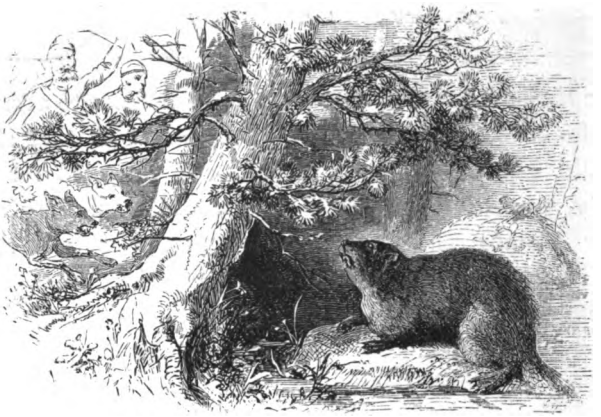

FABLE XVIII.

THE HUNTED BEAVER.

It is said that a Beaver (a creature which lives chiefly in the water) has a certain part about him which is good in physic, and that upon this account he is often hunted down and killed. Once upon a time, as one of these creatures was hard pursued by the dogs, and knew not how to escape, recollecting with himself the reason of his being thus persecuted, with a great resolution and presence of mind, he bit off the part which his hunters wanted, and throwing it towards them, by these means escaped with his life.

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MORAL. The skin is nearer than the cloak.

APPLICATION. This fable may be made of great account. If a heathen could thus from the force of natural instincts teach the value of human life, how much more binding is the lesson on the Christian, who regards life as a divine gift, and to be preserved with the utmost care to the period of its natural termination! The fable teaches that when life is in danger, every thing but honour may be sacrificed for its defence and preservation. It may further illustrate the truth that of two evils, the less is always to be chosen.

Who does the best his circumstance allows
Does well, acts nobly: angels could no more.

It is the lot of man but once to die,
But e'er that death, how many death's have I?

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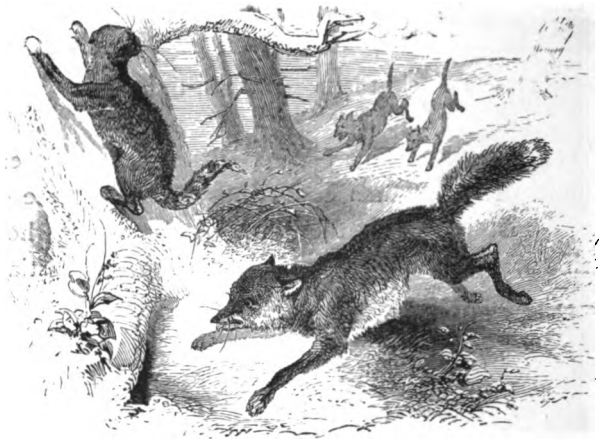

FABLE XIX.

THE CAT AND THE FOX.

As the Cat and the Fox were talking together on a time, in the middle of a forest, Reynard said,—"Let things turn out ever so bad, he did not care for he had a thousand tricks to resort to, before they should hurt him."—"But, pray," says he, "Mrs. Puss, suppose you were in danger from your enemies, what course would you take?"—"Nay," says the cat, "I have but one shift for it, and if that won't do, I am undone."—"I am sorry for you," replies Reynard, "with all my heart, and would gladly furnish you with one or two of mine; but indeed, neighbour, as times go, it is not good to trust; we must even be

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every one for himself, as the saying is,—and so your humble servant." These words were scarce out of his mouth, when they were alarmed with a pack of hounds, that came upon them full cry. The Cat, by the help of her single shift, ran up a tree, and sat securely among the top branches, from whence she beheld Reynard, who had not been able to get out of sight, overtaken with his thousand tricks, and torn into as many pieces by the dogs which had surrounded him.

MORAL. An unstable man shall not excel.

APPLICATION. One aim in life, honestly chosen and diligently persevered in, is the best omen of success. The straight path of duty is the path of safety. The man with many expedients generally fails. He begins many plans, and finishes none. The proverb says, "Hang him that hath no shift and him that hath one too many."

Heaps of weak arts are not so strong as one
With solid prudence first consulted on.

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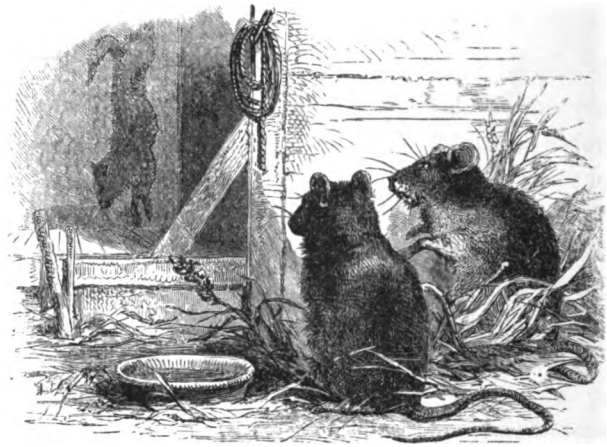

FABLE XX.

THE CAT AND THE MICE.

A CERTAIN house was much infested with Mice; but at last they got a Cat, who every day caught and ate some of them. The Mice, finding their numbers grow thin, consulted what was best to be done for the preservation of the public from the jaws of the devouring Cat. They debated, and came to this resolution,—that no one should go down below the upper shelf. The Cat observing the Mice no longer came down as usual, hungry and disappointed of her prey, had recourse to this stratagem: she hung by her hinder legs on a peg which stuck in the wall, and made as if she had been dead, hoping by this lure to entice the Mice to come

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down. She had not been in this posture long, before a cunning old Mouse peeped over the edge of the shelf, and spoke thus: "Aha, my good friend, are you there? there may you be! I would not trust myself with you, though your skin were stuffed with straw."

MORAL. Experience teaches.

APPLICATION. No second warning is required to teach a wise man to eschew what he has once proved to be hurtful. A burnt child naturally dreads the fire. "He that is twice cheated by the same man is once treated as he deserves."

Though losses and crosses be lessons right severe.
There's wit there you'll get there, you'll find no other where.

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FABLE XXI.

THE LION AND OTHER BEASTS.

THE Lion and several other Beasts entered into an alliance offensive and defensive, and were to live very sociably together in the forest. One day, having made a sort of an excursion by way of hunting, they took a very fine, large, fat deer, which was divided into four parts; there happening to be then present his majesty the Lion, and only three others. After the division was made, and the parts were set out, his majesty, advancing forward some steps and point-

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ing to one of the shares, was pleased to declare himself after the following manner: "This I seize and take possession of as my right, which devolves to me, as I am descended by a true, lineal, hereditary succession from the royal family of Lion; that (pointing to the second) I claim by, I think, no unreasonable demand, considering that all the engagements you have with the enemy turn chiefly upon my courage and conduct; then (nodding his head towards the third) that I shall take by virtue of my prerogative, to which I make no question but so dutiful and loyal a subject will pay all the deference and regard that I can desire. Now, as for the remaining part, the necessity of our present affairs is so very urgent, our stock so low, and our credit so impaired and weakened, that I must insist upon your granting that without any hesitation or demur; and hereof fail not at your peril."

MORAL. Might overcomes right.

APPLICATION. The conduct of the Lion in this fable finds frequent imitation among men. In every private society, at school (the little epitome of the world) and in the world itself, examples of petty tyrannies, arising out of a sense of superior might, constantly abound. The fable would teach that the firmest friendships are formed amongst equals. "The

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request of a lord," says the proverb, "is a force upon a man." "The weakest must go to the wall."

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
Plebeians must surrender
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendour.

Reason and right are of themselves most strong;
No kingdom got by cunning can stand long.

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FABLE XXII.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

A LION, faint with heat, and weary with hunting, was lying down to take his repose under the spreading bows of a thick, shady oak. It happened that, while he slept, a company of scrambling mice ran over his nose, and waked him; upon which, starting up, he clapped his paw upon one of them, and was just about to put it to death, when the little suppliant implored his mercy in a very moving manner, begging him not to stain his noble character with the blood of so despicable and small a beast. The Lion, considering the matter, thought proper to do as he was desired, and immediately released his little trembling prisoner. Not long after, traversing the forest in

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pursuit of his prey, he chanced to run into the toils of the hunters; from whence, not able to disengage himself, he set up a most hideous and loud roar. The Mouse, hearing the voice, and knowing it to be the Lion's, immediately repaired to the place, and bid him fear nothing, for that he was his friend. Then straight he fell to work, and with his little sharp teeth gnawing asunder the knots and fastenings of the toils, set the royal brute at liberty.

MORAL. The least may help the greatest.

APPLICATION. There are none so poor as not to be able to do an occasional kindness; and there are none so exalted but to require at some time or other the aid of friends and neighbours. The fable teaches that it is alike our interest and our duty to exercise kindly feelings and charitable acts towards all, as opportunity is afforded.

And from the prayer of want, and plaint of woe,
Oh, never, never turn away thine ear;
Forlorn in this bleak wilderness below,
Ah! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear?

Then let the social instinct glow,
And learn to feel another's woe.

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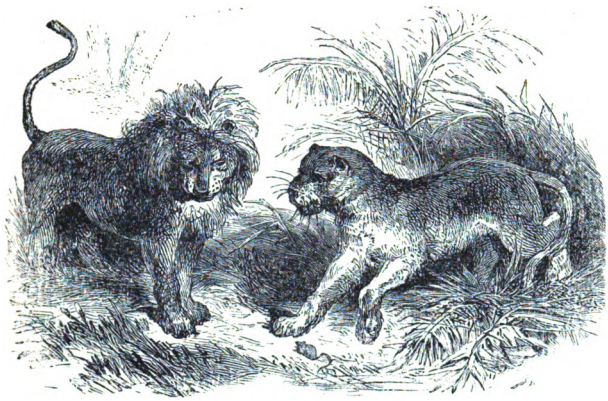

FABLE XXIII.

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.

THE same Lion, touched with the grateful conduct of the Mouse, and resolving not to be outdone in generosity, desired his little deliverer to name his own terms, for that he might depend upon his complying with any proposal he should make. The Mouse, fired with ambition at this gracious offer, did not so much consider what was proper for him to ask, as what was in the power of his prince to grant; and so presumptuously demanded his daughter, the young Lioness, in marriage. The Lion consented; but when he would have given the royal virgin into his possession, she, like a giddy thing as she was, not

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minding how she walked, by chance set her paw upon her unhappy bridegroom, who was coming to meet her, and crushed him to death.

MORAL. Like blood, like goods, and like ages,
Make the happiest marriages.

APPLICATION. Marriage is the most important event in human life between the cradle and the grave. In most cases it either makes or mars, and renders the future either a paradise or a purgatory. An old writer says, Woman was not taken out of man's head, to rule; nor out of his feet, to be subject to him; but out of his side, to be his helpmeet and equal.

She that weds well will wisely match her love;
Nor be below her husband, nor above.

The good or ill hope of a good or ill life,
Is the good or ill choice of a good or ill wife.

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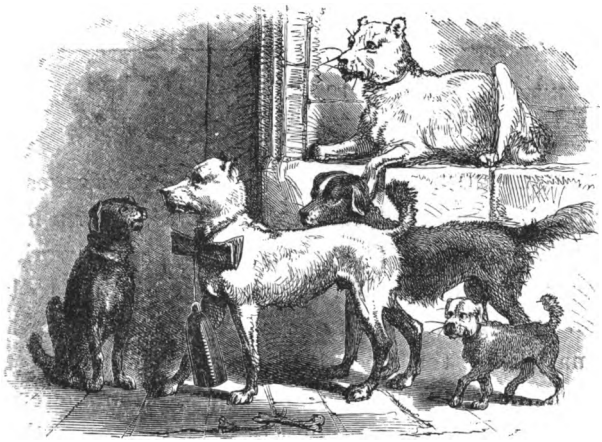

FABLE XXIV.

THE MISCHIEVOUS DOG.

A CERTAIN man had a Dog, which was so surly and mischievous, that he was forced to fasten a heavy clog about his neck, to keep him from running at and worrying people. This the vain cur mistook for a badge of honourable distinction; and grew so insolent upon it, that he looked down with an air of scorn upon the neighbouring dogs, and refused to keep them company. But an old dog, one of his companions, assured him that he had no reason to value himself upon the favour he wore, since it was fixed upon him rather as a mark of disgrace than of honour.

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MORAL. Oh, wad some pow'r the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as others see us!

APPLICATION. Thales, one of the seven sages of ancient Greece, is reported to have said, "For a man to know himself is the hardest thing in the world." The worst examples of this self-ignorance are to be found in those who glory in the things which, in the estimation of the good and worthy, contribute to their shame. The youth who boasts of his indifference to religion, or of his contempt of his father or mother, or of his disrespect to his master, or of a breach of faith and truth, is reproved under the figure of the Dog in this fable, who is represented as taking pride in that which was the surest token of his misconduct and dishonour.

That man must daily wiser grow
Whose search is bent himself to know.

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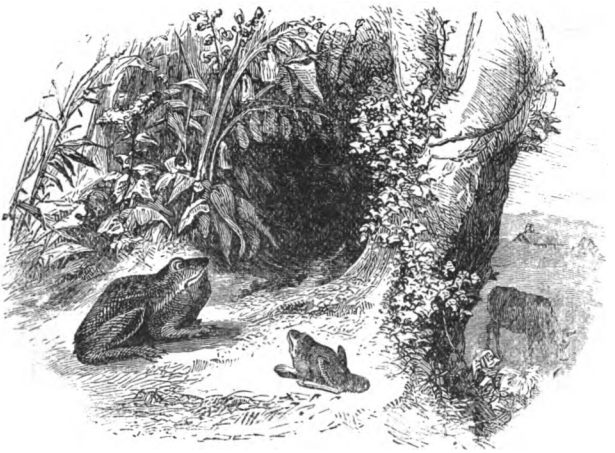

FABLE XXV.

THE OX AND THE FROG.

An Ox, grazing in a meadow, chanced to set his foot among a parcel of young Frogs, and trod one of them to death. The rest informed their mother, when she came home, what had happened; telling her that the beast which did it was the hugest creature that they ever saw in their lives. "What, was it so big?" says the old Frog, swelling and blowing up her speckled skin to a great degree.—"Oh, bigger by a vast deal," say they.—"And so big?" says she, straining herself yet more.—"Indeed, mother," say they, "if you were to burst yourself, you would never be so big." She strove yet again, and burst herself indeed.

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MORAL. Rival not thy betters.

APPLICATION. "The poor shall never cease out of the land." If this be true, then poverty is a divine institution; and a subordination of rank to rank is established as the law impressed upon human society by its divine Author. Could all men be made equal to-morrow, on the next day there would be an inequality again, as men had improved or abused the inheritance entrusted to them.

> Order is Heaven's first law; and this confest,
> Some are, and must be, greater than the rest.

This fable teaches the duty of being contented with the station in which Providence has placed us, and of avoiding that silly ambition which makes men of low estate attempt to vie with their superiors in rank and fortune. A velvet purse is not to be made out of a sow's ear.

> A competent living, and honestly had,
> Makes such as are godly both thankful and glad.

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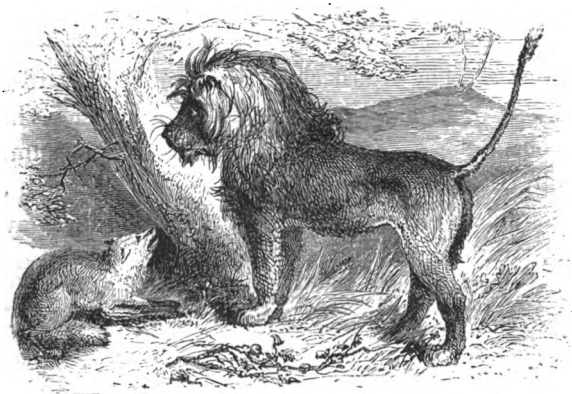

FABLE XXVI.

THE FOX AND THE LION.

THE first time the Fox saw the Lion, he fell down at his feet, and was ready to die with fear. The second time he took courage, and could even bear to look upon him. The third time he had the impudence to come up to him, to salute him, and to enter into familiar conversation with him.

MORAL. Familiarity breeds contempt.

APPLICATION. This short fable is very apposite. It depicts the two great faults into which underbred persons are apt to fall in their behaviour to their

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superiors. They either entertain an awkward and undue fear, which proceeds from ignorance, inexperience, and extreme rusticity, or they assume a forwardness and familiarity which are offensive and insufferable. The true gentleman will alike avoid both these extremes.

Custom makes mortals bold
To play with that they durst not once behold.

Thus injudicious, while one fault we shun,
Into its opposite extreme we run.

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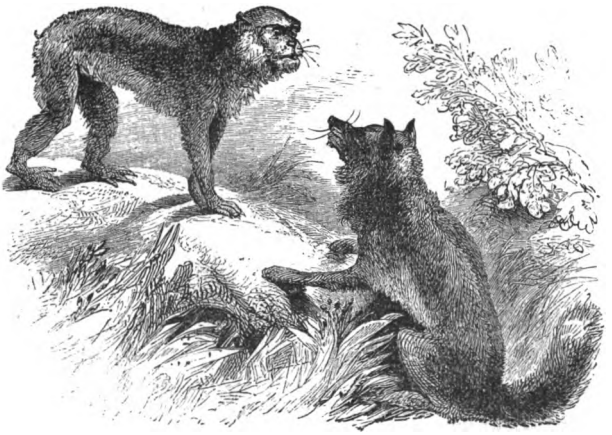

FABLE XXVII.

THE APE AND THE FOX.

THE Ape meeting the Fox one day, humbly requested him to give him some of the hairs from his fine long brush to make into a covering, as he was so exposed to all the violence and inclemency of the weather. "For," says he, "Reynard, you have already more tail than you have occasion for, and a great part of it even drags along in the dirt." The Fox answered, "that as to his having too much, that was more than he knew; but be it as it would, he had rather sweep the ground with his tail as long as he lived, than deprive himself of a single hair to gratify an Ape."

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MORAL. He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing.

APPLICATION. Charity begins at home; but it should not, as is too often the case, end there. The conduct of the Fox in this fable (of which the counterpart is common enough among men) is not amiable, and cannot be commended. The poor relation has claims on the aid of his wealthy kinsman; and a loan granted with judgment and precaution is often of great good. It has been well said,—

> Who bears him gently to his own relations
> Will ne'er show hard to others.

The most perspicuous lesson, however, inculcated by this fable is summed up in the proverb, "Would you know the value of money? go and borrow some."

> Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
> For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
> And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

> Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:
> These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.

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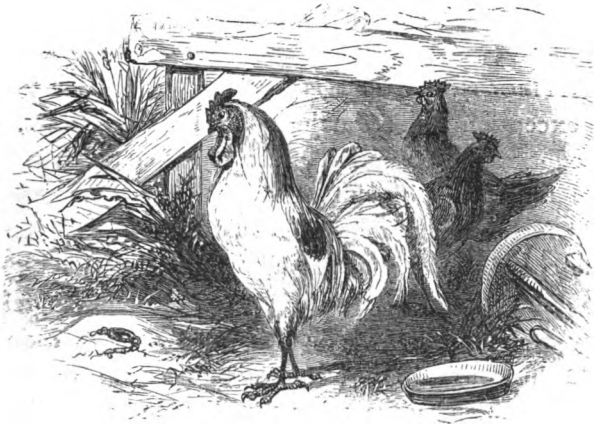

FABLE XXVIII.

THE COCK AND THE JEWEL.

A HANDSOME young Cock, raking upon a dunghill for food for his hens, scratched up with his spurred claw a very precious stone, which sparkled with an exceedingly bright lustre. "Ah!" said the bird, "thou art a very fine thing, but I know not any business thou hast here. If thine owner had found thee, he would have rejoiced; but to me thou art of no use, nor do I value thee at all. I would rather have one grain of dear delicious barley than all the precious stones under the sun."

MORAL. All is not gold that glitters.

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APPLICATION. This is asserted by Dodsley to be an exception to the majority of Æsop's Fables, on account of the obscurity of the moral conveyed in it. The most probable intention of the author was, to hold forth an example of industry and good sense. The cock lives by honest labour: his scratching on the dunghill is the work of his calling. The jewel is only a temptation to divert him, by its splendour, from his business and duty. He would prefer a barleycorn, and casts aside the diamond as a useless bead, not worthy his attention. The lesson inculcated is the wisdom of estimating things by their intrinsic worth, and of refusing to be led away by doubtful fascinations from the known path of duty.

In this the art of living lies,
To want no more than may suffice:
Our portion is not large, indeed;
But then, how little do we need!

Man's rich with little, were his judgment true;
Nature is frugal, and her wants are few.

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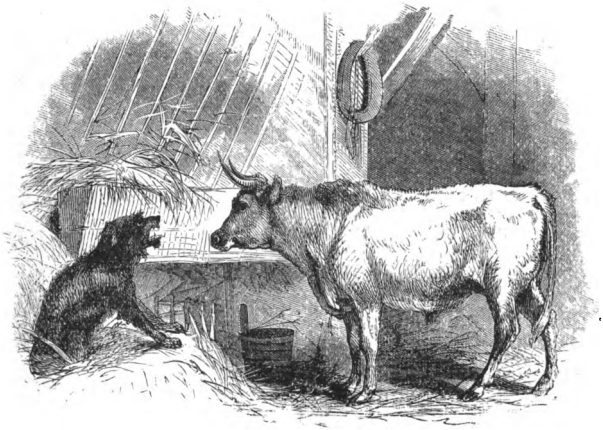

FABLE XXIX.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A DOG was lying upon a manger full of hay. An Ox, being hungry, came near, and offered to eat of the hay; but the envious, ill-natured cur, getting up and snarling at him, would not suffer him to touch it. Upon which the Ox, in the bitterness of his heart, said, "A curse light on thee for a malicious beast, who can neither eat hay thyself, nor will allow those to eat it who can!"

MORAL. Live and let live.

APPLICATION. How often do we see children play

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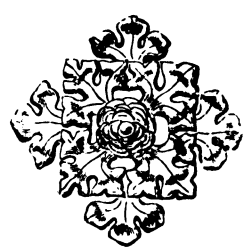
the part of the Dog in the Manger, and refuse their playmates the book or the toy which they are not wanting themselves! The same unaccommodating spirit prevails among men. There are some of such a perverse disposition that they are ready to refuse to their neighbours the very things they most desire, which while in their own keeping are perfectly useless. This common form of human selfishness is well exemplified in this Fable.

Mark well the words: all worldly joys grow less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.



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FABLE XXX.

THE BIRDS, THE BEASTS, AND THE BAT.

ONCE upon a time a fierce war was waged between the Birds and the Beasts; when the Bat, taking advantage of his ambiguous make, declared himself to be neutral, with the secret intention of joining the side of the conquerors. The Bat, at the beginning of the conflict, thinking the birds most likely to carry it, enlisted himself among them; but kept fluttering at a little distance, that he might the better observe, and take his measures accordingly. However, after some time spent in the action, the army of the Beasts seeming to prevail, he went entirely over to them, and endeavoured to convince them, by the affinity

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which he had to a mouse, that he was by nature a beast, and would always continue firm and true to their interest. His plea was admitted; but, in the end, the advantage turning completely on the side of the Birds, under the admirable conduct and courage of their general the eagle, the Bat, to save his life, and escape the disgrace of falling into the hands of his deserted friends, betook himself to flight; and ever since, skulking in caves and hollow trees all day, as if ashamed to show himself, never appears till the dusk of the evening, when all the feathered inhabitants of the air are gone to roost.

MORAL. Traitors are odious, even to those who profit by their treason.

APPLICATION. Traitors have been found through all times and ages; in courts, camps, senates, and peoples. The treachery may originate in fear, or in the desire of personal advantage, or from a mercenary spirit prompted by gold and bribes, or from the innate degradation of a sordid nature, which secretly hates and resents a deed of heroism. Whatever be the cause, the author of the treachery, like the Bat in the fable, is an object of hatred and suspicion to those who profit by his treason.

> Know, villains, when such paltry slaves presume
> To mix in treason, if the plot succeeds,
> They're thrown neglected by.

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It must be remembered that there is a kind of moral treason of which all may be guilty, when they allow momentary self-interest, bad example, or any inferior motive, to betray them into actions offensive to their better nature, and which their conscience condemns.

In friendship false; implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.

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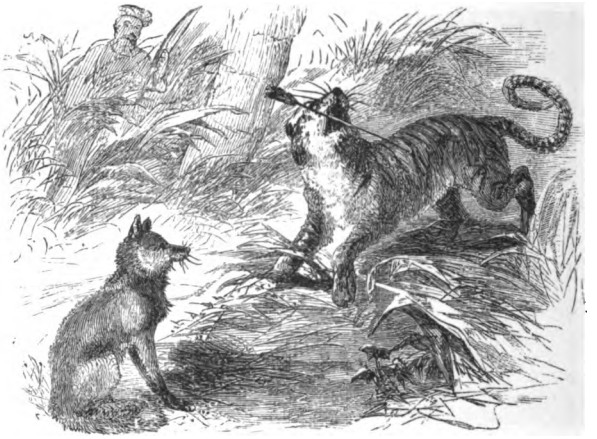

FABLE XXXI.

THE FOX AND THE TIGER.

A SKILFUL archer coming into the woods, directed his arrows so successfully, that he slew many wild beasts. This put all the denizens of the forest into a fearful consternation, and made them fly to the most retired thickets for refuge. At last a Tiger assumed a brave front and courage, and, bidding his companions not to be afraid, said that he alone would engage the enemy; telling them they might depend upon his valour and strength to revenge their wrongs. In the midst of these threats, while he was lashing himself with his tail, and tearing up the ground in anger, an arrow pierced his ribs, and hung by its barbed point

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in his side. He set up a loud and hideous roar, occasioned by the anguish which he felt, and endeavoured to draw out the painful dart with his teeth; when the Fox, approaching him, inquired with an air of surprise who it was that could have strength and courage enough to wound so mighty and valorous a beast. "Ah!" says the Tiger, "I was mistaken in my reckoning: it was that invincible man yonder."

MORAL. Knowledge is power.

APPLICATION. Man, armed with his high prerogative of reason, although of himself the most powerless of all creatures for attack or defence, is enabled, by his knowledge, science, and invention of weapons of destruction, to obtain an easy mastery over the most powerful and unruly of animals. By the same principle the superiority of one nation over another is indicated and maintained. As the Tiger in the fable succumbed to the superior skill of the archer, so in international contests the final victory will remain with that people and country who can bring into the conflict an augmented power in its fleets and armaments.

> Unwisely who provokes an abler foe,
> Conquest still flies him, and he strives for woe.

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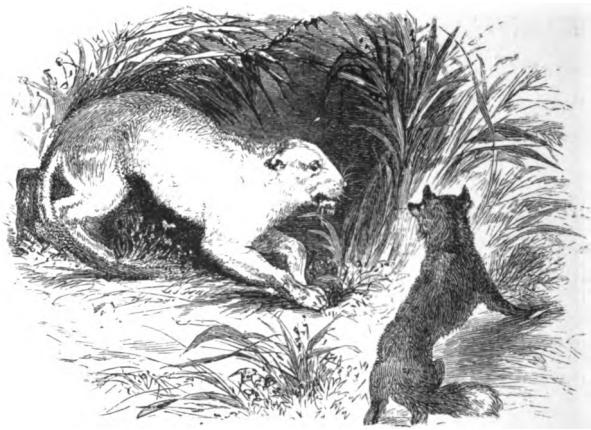

FABLE XXXII.

THE LIONESS AND THE FOX.

THE Lioness and the Fox meeting together, fell into discourse. The conversation, by some means, turned on the comparatively greater fruitfulness of some living creatures to others. The Fox observed to the Lioness, that, for her part, she thought Foxes were as happy in that respect as almost any other creatures, for that they always had a good litter of cubs once a year; "and yet," says she, "there are those who never give birth to more than one at a

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time, and that, perhaps, not above once or twice through their whole life, and yet value themselves so much upon it, that they think all other creatures beneath them, and scarce worthy to be spoken to." The Lioness, perceiving that this reflection pointed at herself, was fired with resentment, and replied, "What you have observed may be true, and that not without reason. You produce a great many at a litter, and often; but what are they?—Foxes. I indeed have but one at a time; but you should remember that this one is a Lion."

MORAL. Noble birth implies noble deeds.

APPLICATION. The crow thinks her own bird fairest. The partiality of natural affection causes all parents to feel a preference for, and to maintain the superiority of, their own children.

> Where yet was ever found the mother
> Who'd give her booby for another?

The fable is not intended to reprove this parental failing; it carries with it a deeper meaning. It is designed to show that noble parentage imposes most serious obligations, and that high birth, if it be not accompanied with noble deeds and honourable conduct, becomes a reproach rather than a

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glory. The French proverb well says, "Noblesse oblige."

For if beneath, no real virtue reign,
On the gay coat the star is but a stain.

A great and fatal weight on him doth lie—
The greatness of his own nobility.

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FABLE XXXIII.

THE OAK AND THE REED.

An Oak, which hung over the bank of a river, was blown down by a violent storm of wind; and as it was carried along by the stream, some of its boughs brushed against a Reed which grew near the shore. This struck the Oak with a thought of admiration; and he could not forbear asking the Reed how he came to stand so secure and unhurt in a tempest which had been furious enough to tear an Oak up by the roots. "Why," says the Reed, "I secure myself by putting on a behaviour quite contrary to what you do: instead of being stubborn and stiff, and confiding in my strength, I yield and

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bend to the blast, and let it go over me; knowing how vain and fruitless it would be to resist."

MORAL. Stoop to conquer.

APPLICATION. A greater gain often accrues from concession than resistance. In domestic life, the wife who yields most, rules most:

> Charms by accepting; by submitting, sways;
> Yet has her humour most when she obeys.

This spirit of conciliation, however amiable, must never, either in man or woman, amount to a sacrifice of principle, or to a dereliction of duty. But within certain bounds we may use all honest exertions to agree with an adversary. He who concedes at the right moment may, by stooping, conquer. "Cede repugnanti, cedendo victor abibis."

> The sweetest bird builds near the ground,
> The loveliest flower springs low;
> And we must stoop for happiness,
> If we its worth would know.

> Humility, that low sweet root,
> From which all heavenly virtues shoot.

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FABLE XXXIV.

THE WIND AND THE SUN.

A DISPUTE once arose betwixt the North Wind and the Sun about the superiority of their power; and they agreed to try their strength upon a traveller, which should be able to get his cloak off first. The North Wind began, and blew a very cold blast, accompanied with a sharp, driving shower. But this, and whatever else he could do, instead of making the man quit his cloak, obliged him to gird it about his body as close as possible. Next came the Sun;

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who, breaking out from a thick watery cloud, drove away the cold vapours from the sky, and darted his warm, sultry beams upon the head of the poor weather-beaten traveller. The man growing faint with the heat, and unable to endure it any longer, first throws off his heavy cloak, and then flies for protection to the shade of a neighbouring grove.

MORAL. A soft tongue breaketh the bone.

APPLICATION. How much more powerful a motive in human actions is love than fear! How much more readily does the heart of the man or of the child respond to kindness than to harshness! There is a very remarkable reflection attributed to the Emperor Napoleon, when, as an exile at St. Helena, he looked back on his past life. He is reported to have said, "My empire, and those of the other great conquerors, Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Charlemagne, were all founded on fear; and all have perished. There was only one based on love, that of the Great Author of Christianity; and that alone continues, and will endure." The spirit of the Master should animate His followers. The law of kindness finds the greatest success to the human heart. Persuasion prevails more than force. Mild-

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ness governs more than anger. Fair and soft go far in a day.

Seek not with violence to do
What patience may effect;
By gentle means, 'tis easier oft
To heal and to correct.

Loud threatenings make men stubborn, but kind words
Pierce gentle breasts sooner than sharpest swords.

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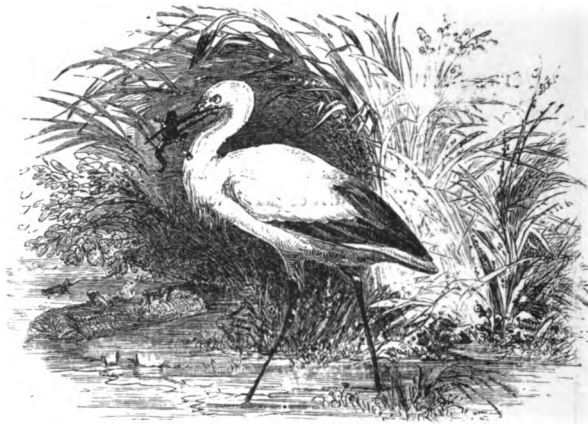

FABLE XXXV.

THE FROGS DESIRING A KING.

THE Frogs, living an easy, free life everywhere among the lakes and ponds, assembled together, one day, in a very tumultuous manner, and petitioned Jupiter to let them have a King. Jupiter ridiculed their request; and, throwing a large Log down into the pool, cried, "There is a King for you." The sudden splash which this made by its fall into the water at first terrified them so exceedingly that they were afraid to come near it. But in a little time, seeing it lay still without moving, they ventured, by degrees, to approach it; and at last, finding there was no danger, they leaped upon it; and, in short, treated it as familiarly as they pleased. But not

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contented with so harmless a King, they sent their deputies to petition again for another ruler, for this they neither did nor could like. Jupiter next sent them a Stork, who, without any ceremony, began to devour and to eat them up, one after another, as fast as he could. Then they applied themselves privately to Mercury, and begged him to speak to Jupiter in their behalf, that he would be so good as to bless them again with another King, or restore to them their former Sovereign. "No," says he; "since it was their own choice, let them suffer the punishment due to their folly."

MORAL. Resist not, for slight reasons, constituted authorities.

APPLICATION. The occasion of this fable is well known. Æsop was at Athens at the time when Pisistratus availed himself of the factions prevalent in that state to make himself master of the liberties of its people. Although Pisistratus was a just and equitable ruler, the Athenian citizens bore the yoke of his government with much impatience, and entered into frequent plots and cabals for its overthrow. Æsop spoke this fable to reconcile the people to his rule, and to caution them last, in getting rid of Pisistratus, they should find themselves under the lash of a severer taskmaster.

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The people of this happy country are remarkable for their loyal attachment to their sovereign. This fable will be ever popular among them. It inculcates lessons of loyalty, and fosters that spirit of obedience so dear to the hearts of Englishmen. At the same time it teaches that it is better to bear with some slight defects in a mild and gentle government, than to seek a remedy in rash innovations or uncalled-for changes, which may result in greater evils.

I would serve my king :
Serve him with all my fortune here at home,
And serve him with my person in the wars,—
As every true-born subject ought.

Let them not live to taste this land's increase,
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace.

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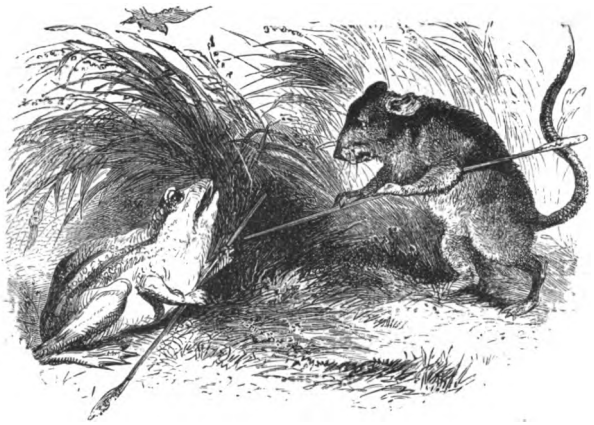

FABLE XXXVI.

THE KITE, THE FROG, AND THE MOUSE.

THERE was once a great strife between the Frog and the Mouse, which should be master of the fen; and wars ensued upon it. But the crafty Mouse, lurking under the grass in ambuscade, made sudden sallies, and often surprised the enemy at a disadvantage. The Frog, excelling in strength, and being more able to leap abroad and take the field, challenged the Mouse to single combat. The Mouse accepts the challenge; and each combatant entered the lists, armed with a point of a bulrush instead of a spear. A Kite, sailing in the air, beheld them afar off; and, while they were eagerly bent upon each

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other, and pressing on to the duel, this fatal enemy descended upon them, and with her crooked talons carried off both the champions.

MORAL. Factions breed mischief in a state.

APPLICATION. The history of the republics of ancient Greece, with their numerous divisions, bitter intestine feuds, and violent factions, finds its counterpart in this fable. It admits, like the preceding, an exclusively political interpretation. The author seeks to moderate the factions among his fellow-citizens, and to promote harmony among all classes of the community, by warning them that the mutual divisions proceeding from party animosities were ofttimes the surest precursors of foreign aggression.

So should confederate states and people hush all inward strife,
When from without a foreign foe assails a nation's life ;
All discords then out-trodden : 'tis by unity alone
The free shall have their freedom, and the brave preserve their own.

The lesson conveyed by this fable is of universal application. In all, even in the best-governed states, lovers of change and leaders of faction exist.

'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.

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FABLE XXXVII.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER MAIDS.

A CERTAIN Old Lady had several Maids, whom she used to call up to their work every morning at the crowing of the cock. The Women, who found it grievous to have their sweet sleep disturbed so early, combined together, and killed the cock; thinking that, when the alarm was gone, they might enjoy themselves in their warm beds a little longer. The Old Lady, grieved for the loss of her cock, and having, by some means or other, discovered the whole plot, was resolved to be even with them; for from that time she obliged them to rise constantly at midnight.

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MORAL. Beware of falling from bad to worse.

APPLICATION. There is probably no situation of life in which all things will be exactly in accordance with our wishes. Oftentimes, in an endeavour to avoid a present grievance, we involve ourselves in greater troubles. The fable teaches that it is better to bear with some inconveniences, than run the risk of making matters worse by vain attempts to mend them. Too much carefulness overreacheth itself. Be slow in choosing, but slower in changing. Better to lose the wool than the sheep.

Since no condition from defect is free,
Think not to find what here can never be.

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FABLE XXXVIII.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX.

A LION and a Bear fought furiously together over the carcass of a fawn which they found in the forest, that their title to him might be decided by force of arms. The battle was severe and equal on both sides; and they held out, tearing and worrying one another, so long, that, faint and weary with their wounds, they were not able to strike another stroke. Thus, while they lay upon the ground, panting, and lolling out their tongues, a Fox chanced to pass by that way, who perceiving how the case stood, very impudently stepped in between them, seized the booty which they had been contending for, and carried it off.

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The two combatants, who lay and beheld the theft without having strength enough to stir and prevent it, made this reflection: "Behold the fruits of our strife and contention! that villain, the Fox, bears away the prize, and we ourselves have deprived each other of the power to recover it from him."

MORAL. Grasp all, loose all.

APPLICATION. How truly does this fable describe a common but bitter phase of human experience! How frequently do men, by aiming at too much, lose all! One example will suffice as an illustration. A man may, and often does, in his too strenuous exertions to amass wealth, or to gain honours, sacrifice his health, and thus finds too late that he has lost all in the attainment of the object of his ambition.

'Tis thus in life we not unfrequent see
How some men labour long and wearily
T' achieve a purpose which they have in view,
Yet lose their labour and the object too.

The lands and the riches that here we possess,
Be none of our own, if a God we profess.

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FABLE XXXIX.

THE CROW AND THE PITCHER.

A CROW, ready to die with thirst, flew with joy to a Pitcher, which he beheld at some distance. When he came, he found water in it indeed, but so near the bottom, that, with all his stooping and straining, he was not able to reach it. Then he endeavoured to overturn the Pitcher, that so at least he might be able to get a little of it. But his strength was not sufficient for this. At last, seeing some pebbles lie near the place, he cast them one by one into the Pitcher; and thus, by degrees, raised the water up to the very brim, and satisfied his thirst.

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MORAL. Counsel before action.

APPLICATION. Force without foresight is of no avail. The possession of mere strength is well enough for the animals; but the chief excellency of man consists in the gift of reason, and in the exercise of that gift; in fertility of invention, and in discovery of resources and expedients in situations of danger and difficulty. He who unites mature reflection with energetic exertion, will succeed where others fail, and will extract from every new trial sources of credit and advantage.

That which is well considered, best succeeds;
That which is well conducted, surest speeds.

See, ere that thou do build, thy purse and plans do match:
The hasty hand a frog oft for a fysche dothe catche.

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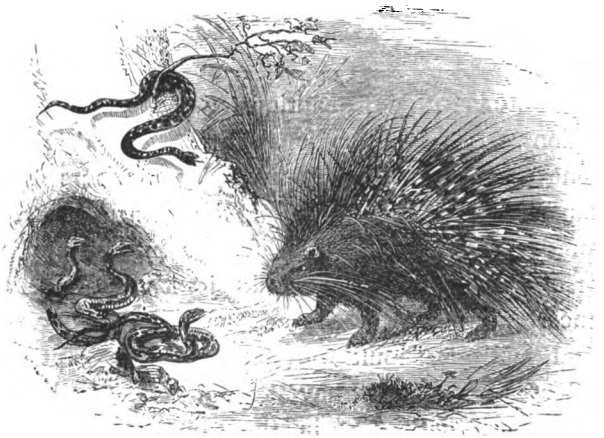

FABLE XL.

THE PORCUPINE AND THE SNAKES.

A PORCUPINE wanting to shelter himself, requested from some snakes permission to enter their cave. They were prevailed upon, and let him in accordingly; but were so annoyed with his sharp, prickly quills, that they soon repented of their easy compliance, and entreated the Porcupine to withdraw, and leave them their hole to themselves. "No," says he; "they may quit the place who don't like it; for my part, I am well enough satisfied as I am."

MORAL. They who their friends too lightly choose,
Soon friends and all besides may lose.

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APPLICATION. Be cautious in choosing thy companions. A false step is seldom retrieved. Better alone than in bad company. The manners of the man we desire for a friend, the principles of the woman we choose for a wife, the integrity of the person with whom we would jointly manage and concert measures for the advancement of our temporal interest, should be narrowly and cautiously inspected: we should have tried a person well before we embark with him in the same vessel, lest we should alter our mind when it is too late, and think of regaining the shore after we have launched out of our depth.

Be cautious how you choose a friend;
For friendships that are lightly made,
Have seldom any other end
Than grief to see one's trust betrayed.

Who from mishap in life himself would guard,
Must prove his friend as he would prove his sword.

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FABLE XLI.

THE HARES AND FROGS IN A STORM.

ONCE in a great storm of wind that blew among the trees and bushes, and made a deep rustling with the leaves, the Hares (in a certain park where there was a vast number of them) were so terrified that they ran as if mad with fright all over the place, resolving to seek out some retreat of more security, or to end their unhappy days by doing violence to themselves. With this resolution they found an outlet where a pale had been broken down, and, bolting forth upon an adjoining common, had not gone far before their course was checked by a broad lake which stopped up the way they intended to take. This was

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so grievous a disappointment, that they were not able to bear it; and they determined rather to throw themselves headlong into the water, let what would come of it, than lead a life so full of dangers and crosses. But, upon their coming to the brink of the lake, a number of Frogs, which were sitting there, frighted at their approach, leapt into the flood in great confusion, and dived to the very bottom for fear: which a cunning old Hare observing, called to the rest and said: "Hold! have a care what ye do; here are other creatures, I perceive, which have their fears as well as we: don't, then, let us fancy ourselves the most miserable of any creatures upon earth; but rather let us, by their example, learn to bear patiently those inconveniences which our nature has thrown upon us."

MORAL. Beware of desperate steps.

APPLICATION. Of all the weaknesses to which flesh is heir, despair is the most irrational and unmanly. It is the offspring of an unworthy fear, of an undue impatience, and of an entire distrust of divine Providence; and indicates a total absence of that spirit and resolution in contending with difficulties which is the peculiar characteristic and dignity of a reasonable creature. Against this spirit of despondency the fable protests. It lifts the word of

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warning against that disordered imagination which unduly magnifies dangers, makes its victims their own self-tormentors, and brings them under the miserable thraldom of an ever present expectation of calamities. As long as there is life, there is hope. All the clouds in the sky do not drop. Good heart in evils doth the evils much amend. Tu ne cede malis, sed contra cendentior ito.

Do not t' invading ills thyself resign,
But 'gainst their force with greater strength combine ;
For when th' are scattered, a serene repose
Will all thy vanquished difficulties close.

Though plunged in ills, and exercised in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair.

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FABLE XLII.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF.

THE Wolf having laid in store of provision, kept close at home, and made himself comfortable. The Fox observed this, and went to visit him, to inform himself of the truth of the matter. The Wolf excused himself from seeing him, by pretending he was very much indisposed. All this did but confirm the Fox in his suspicions: so away he went to a shepherd, and made discovery of the Wolf; telling him he had nothing else to do but to come with a good weapon, and knock him on the head as he lay in his cave. The shepherd followed his directions and killed the Wolf. The wicked Fox enjoyed the cave and pro-

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visions to himself, but enjoyed them not long; for the same shepherd, passing afterwards by the same hole, and seeing the Fox there, despatched him also.

MORAL. Harm hatch, harm catch.

APPLICATION. How frequently does human experience provide proofs of the truth of this fable! The evil that men plot for others often, by a righteous retribution, recoils on themselves. "Curses," says an Eastern proverb, "like chickens, come home to roost." He that striketh with the sword shall be beaten with the scabbard. "Cædimus, inque vicem præbemus crura sagittis."

The evil deed
Brings its requital as the doer's meed.

To him who mischief seeks, shall mischief fall;
There comes an hour that recompenses all.

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FABLE XLIII.

THE DOG AND THE SHEEP.

THE Dog sued the Sheep for debt, of which the kite and the Wolf where to be judges. They, without debating long upon the matter, or making any scruple for want of evidence, gave sentence for the Dog; who immediately tore the poor Sheep in pieces, and divided the spoil with the unjust judges.

MORAL. Judges should be disinterested.

APPLICATION. The need of the counsel contained in this fable has in these days, happily, passed away. If there is one thing above another on which English-

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men congratulate themselves, and feel a pride in their country, it is on the purity of the fountains of justice, and on the impartiality shown in its administration. The law in this land is no respecter of persons. An obedience to its requirements is paid with equal cheerfulness by the sovereign on the throne and by the peasant in the cottage. If each would mend one, all would be amended.

A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod,
An honest man's the noblest work of God.

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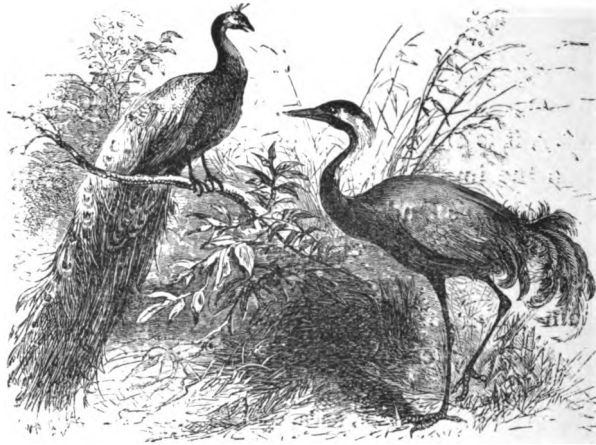

FABLE XLIV.

THE PEACOCK AND THE CRANE.

THE Peacock and the Crane by chance met together in the same place. The Peacock, erecting his tail, displayed his gaudy plumes, and looked with contempt upon the Crane, as some mean, ordinary person. The Crane, resolving to mortify his insolence, took occasion to say, that Peacocks were very fine birds indeed, if fine feathers could make them so; but that he thought it a much nobler thing to be able to rise above the clouds, than to strut about upon the ground, and be gazed at by children.

MORAL. Appearances are deceitful.

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APPLICATION. This fable is not intended to disparage the magnificence of rich clothes or splendid equipages, which, as times and circumstances require, may be used with propriety, and which are necessary to the due maintenance of the dignity of exalted rank. It solely protests against the unreasonableness of those who attribute personal worth and excellency to themselves from the mere possession of these advantages. Many an honest heart beats under a plain coat:

> An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
> Broadcloth without, and a warm heart within.

Fine feathers do not always make fine birds. Fair is not fair, but that which pleaseth. The meek and quiet spirit is of greater price than personal beauty, or the wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel.

> In vain the faultless features strike,
> When soul and body are unlike.
> Pity that snowy breast should hide
> Deceit, and avarice, and pride.

> Smooth dissimulation! skilled to grace
> A devil's purpose with an angel's face.

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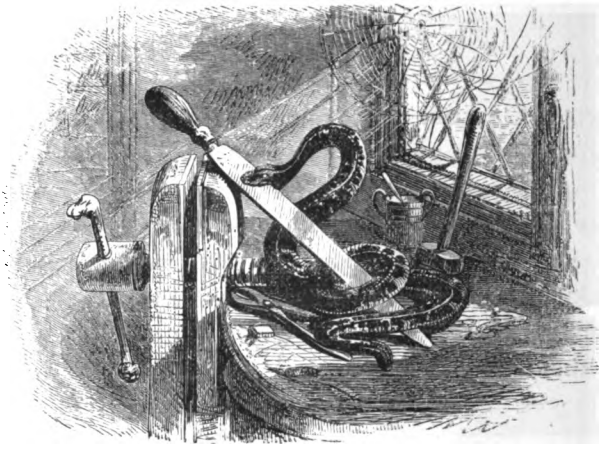

FABLE XLV.

THE VIPER AND THE FILE.

A VIPER entering a smith's shop, looked up and down for something to eat; and seeing a File, fell to gnawing it as greedily as could be. The File told him very gruffly, that he had best be quiet and let him alone; for he would get very little by nibbling at one who, upon occasion, could bite iron and steel.

MORAL. Attempt not impossibilities.

APPLICATION. There is a class of persons to be found in every community who engage thoughtlessly in pursuits for which they are not fitted, and persevere

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therein to their own hurt, and to the loss alike of their fortune and reputation. To them this fable offers a word of friendly warning. They are the vipers biting the file, and injuring no one but themselves.

Sure, of all follies this the greatest is,
Madly t' attempt impossibilities.

What Fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

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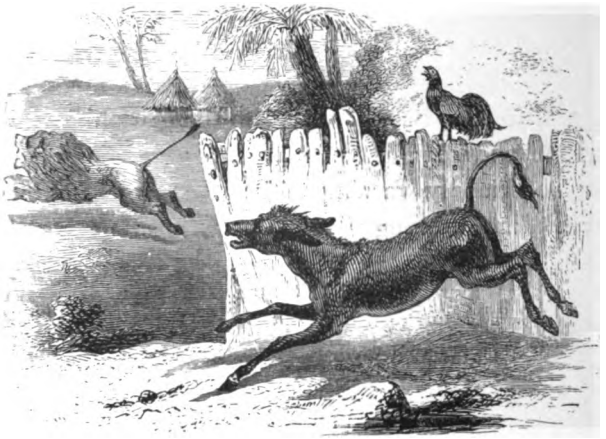

FABLE XLVI.

THE ASS, THE LION, AND THE COCK.

An Ass and a Cock were feeding together in the same place, when on a sudden they saw a Lion approaching them. This beast is reported above all things to have an aversion to the crowing of a Cock; so that he no sooner heard the voice of that bird, but he took to his heels, and ran away as fast as ever he could. The Ass, fancying he fled for fear of him, in the bravery of his heart pursued him, and followed him so far, that they were quite out of the hearing of the Cock; which the Lion no sooner perceived, but he turned about and seized the Ass; and just as he was ready to tear him to pieces, the foolish creature

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expressed himself thus:—"Alas! fool that I was, knowing the cowardice of my own nature, thus by an affected courage to throw myself into the jaws of death, when I might have remained secure and unmolested!"

MORAL. Great braggers, little doers.

APPLICATION. How often do we meet persons in society who have a habit of boasting themselves able to do many things, which, when put to the proof, they fail of accomplishing!

Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it shall come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass.

They who thus overrate their own deeds and abilities, expose themselves to the ridicule of their companions, and risk the loss of the esteem and respect of those whose praise is worth having. The emptiest tub makes the loudest noise. There is often a great cry and little wool. A silent tongue makes a wise head.

Little men found undertaking
What the great alone may do,
Like all who their part mistaking,
Soon or late their folly rue.

And some I see, again, sit still and say but small;
They can do more than they that say they can do all.

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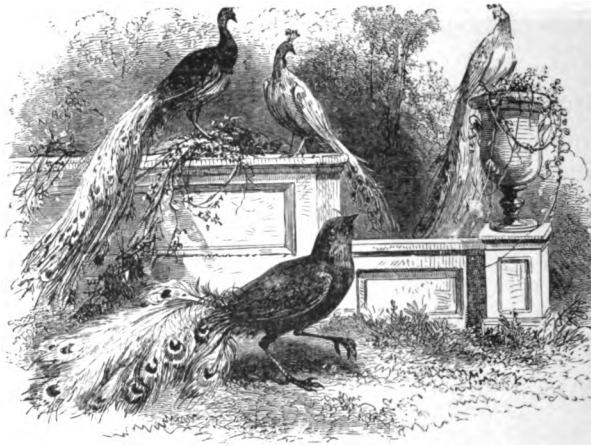

FABLE XLVII.

THE JACKDAW AND PEACOCKS.

A CERTAIN Jackdaw was so proud and ambitious, that, not contented to live with his own kind, he picked up the feathers which fell from the Peacocks, stuck them in among his own, and very confidently introduced himself into an assembly of those beautiful birds. As soon as they saw him, they stripped him of his borrowed plumes, and, falling upon him with their sharp bills, punished him as his presumption deserved. Upon this, full of grief and affliction, he returned to his old companions, and would have lived with them again; but they, knowing his late vain conduct, industriously avoided him, and refused to

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admit him into their company; and one of them, at the same time, gave him this serious reproof: "If, friend, you could have been contented with your station, and had not disdained the rank in which Nature had placed you, you had neither been rejected by those upon whom you intruded yourself, nor exposed to the notorious slight which we are now about to put upon you."

MORAL. Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.

APPLICATION. Some persons assume an importance which does not really belong to them, and thereby perpetually expose themselves to mortification, either from the contemptuous civility of their superiors, or from the scornful indifference of their equals. The true gentleman will carefully eschew these unfounded pretensions. Thus, respecting himself, he will conciliate respect from others. Seek honestly to be what you appear, careful neither to sink below nor to soar above your true position in life, and thus you will learn the lesson this fable is intended to convey.

One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas.

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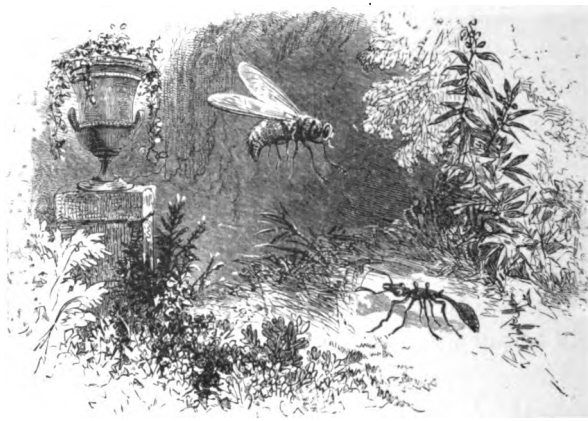

FABLE XLVIII.

THE ANT AND THE FLY.

ONE day there happened some words between the Ant and the Fly as to whose course of life was the more to be admired, and the point was argued with great warmth and eagerness on both sides. Says the Fly, "It is well known what my pretensions are, and how justly they are grounded: there is never a sacrifice that is offered, but I taste of the meat before the shrines of the gods themselves. I visit all the most magnificent temples, and am found frequently on the altars. I have a free admission at court; and can never want the king's ear, for I sometimes sit upon his shoulder. There is not a maid of honour nor a

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fair young woman that comes in my way, but, if I like her, I settle on her balmy lips. And then, I eat and drink the best of everything, without having to work for my living. What is there that you enjoy to be compared with a life like this?" The Ant, who by this time had composed herself, replied with a considerable degree of severity, "Indeed, to be a guest at an entertainment of the gods is a very great honour, if one is invited; but I should not care to be an unasked guest anywhere. You talk of the king, and the court, and the fine ladies there, with great familiarity; but, as I have been getting in my harvest in summer, I have seen a certain person under the town walls making a hearty meal upon refuse and carrion. You do not work for your living, you say; true: therefore, when you have played away the summer, and winter comes, you have nothing to live upon; and, while you will be starving with cold and hunger, I shall have a good warm house over my head, and plenty of provisions for myself and my children."

MORAL. Bread earned by labour is sweet.

APPLICATION. Under the emblems of these insects, two opposite classes of men are described—the industrious and the idle: those who, like the Ant, redeem their time, and live under a solemn sense of the

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greatness of human responsibilities; and those who seek to please themselves, and bask away their life in the summer sunshine of perpetual amusement. With the first lies the solid happiness of life. The curse of labour inflicted upon man contained within itself the seed of a secret blessing. The man who has nothing to do, and who roams about listless and discontented, a burden to himself and to others, is miserable. The man of employment, who most adapts himself to the constitution of his nature, whether his labour be voluntarily undertaken, or whether imposed by the necessity of his circumstances, finds in his diligent and persevering attention to those labours an assured recompence of reward.

Work, work, my boy,—be not afraid;
Look labour boldly in the face:
Take up the hammer or the spade,
And blush not for your humble place.

And easy good brings easy gains,
And things of price are bought with pains.

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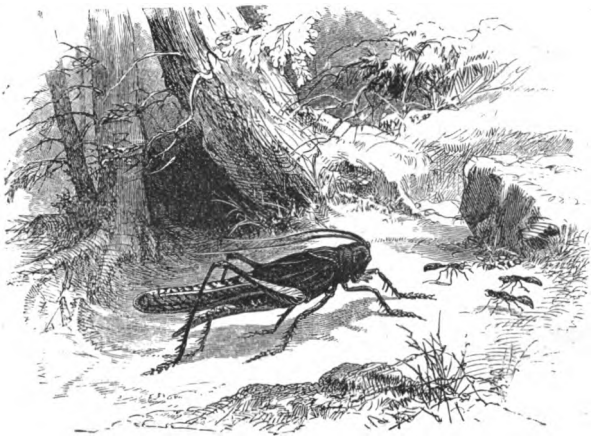

FABLE XLIX.

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

IN the winter season, a commonwealth of Ants was busily employed in the management and preservation of their corn, which they exposed to the air in heaps round about the avenues of their little country habitation. A Grasshopper, who had chanced to outlive the summer, and was ready to starve with cold and hunger, approached them with great humility, and begged that they would relieve his necessity with one grain of wheat or rye. One of the Ants asked him how he had disposed of his time in summer, that he had not taken pains and laid in a stock, as they had done. "Alas, gentlemen!" says he, "I passed

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away the time merrily and pleasantly, in drinking, singing, and dancing, and never once thought of winter."—"If that be the case," replied the Ant, laughing, "all I have to say is, that they who drink, sing, and dance in the summer, must starve in the winter."

MORAL. Provide for the future.

APPLICATION. The troubles of life would be much harder to bear if they were foreseen. The future, therefore, is in mercy concealed from man. The requirements of old age, and the need of rest, if life is spared, are things inevitable, and ought to be provided for in the earlier years of strength and opportunity. Work of some kind or other, whether of the hand or of the head, is the lot of humankind.

For all must work ; with head or hand,
For self or others, good or ill ;
Life is ordained to bear, like land,
Some fruit, be fallow as it will.

This fable teaches the prudent man, while he is in the full strength of his days, to store up something against the wants and infirmities of age, lest he should have to regret, when too late, his time misspent and his opportunities unimproved.

If youth did know what age would crave,
Many a penny youth would save.

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FABLE L.

THE COUNTRYMAN AND THE SNAKE.

A VILLAGER, in a frosty, snowy winter, found a Snake under a hedge, almost dead with cold. He had compassion on the poor creature, brought it home, and laid it upon the hearth, near the fire; but it had not lain there long, before, being revived with the heat, it began to erect itself, and to fly at his wife and children, filling the whole cottage with dreadful hissings. The Countryman, hearing an outcry, and perceiving what the matter was, caught up a mattock, and soon despatched him; upbraiding him at the same time in these words: "Is this, vile reptile, the reward you make to me for saving your life?

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Die as you deserve; though a single death is too good for you."

MORAL. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!

APPLICATION. What a thrill of pleasure does the reception of a kindness cause in an honourable heart, and how ardent is the longing to repay it in a grateful profusion of service to the benefactor! Just as the brilliancy of the light makes the gloom of the darkness to be thicker, so does the fault of ingratitude increase in its blackness when contemplated by a grateful spirit. All teachers and sages who, by their moral maxims and wise counsels, have sought to instruct mankind, have united to hold up the ungrateful to deserved censure and reprobation. The author of this fable visits the offender with a punishment commensurate with his crime.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind;
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.

Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,
When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!

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FABLE LI.

THE FOX AND THE SICK LION.

It was reported that the Lion was sick, and the beasts were made to believe that they could not make their court better than by going to visit him. Upon this, nearly all went; but the Fox was not one of the number. The Lion therefore despatched a jackal to inquire about it, and to ask him why he had so little courtesy and respect as never to come near him at a time when he lay so dangerously ill, and everybody else had been to see him. "Why,"

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replies the Fox, "pray present my duty to his majesty, and tell him that I have the same respect for him as ever, and have been coming several times to kiss his royal hand; but I am so terribly frightened at the mouth of his cave, to see the print of my fellow-subjects' feet all pointing forwards and none backwards, that I have not resolution enough to venture in." Now, the truth of the matter was, that this sickness of the Lion's was only a pretence to draw the beasts into his den, that he might the more easily devour them.

MORAL. It is easiest learning at another's cost.

APPLICATION. The truly wise man will learn not only by his own personal trials, but will profit by the experience of others. The Fox, tracing the footsteps of his companions in one direction, discovered the lion's den; and by finding none in the opposite track, availed himself of the experience afforded by his friends, and so escaped their fate and destruction. After his example, we may learn from others' pain. It is far better to borrow experience than to buy it. He that is warned by the folly of others, has perhaps attained the soundest wisdom. "That is indeed," says Colton, "a twofold knowledge, which profits alike by the folly of the foolish and the wisdom of the wise; it is both a shield and a sword; it borrows its security

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from the darkness, and its confidence from the light."

Many, who have themselves but little skill
To shape their course where perils may accrue,
Avert full oft the greater share of ill,
And take example from what others do.

Then happy is he by example that can
Take heed by the fall of a mischievèd man.

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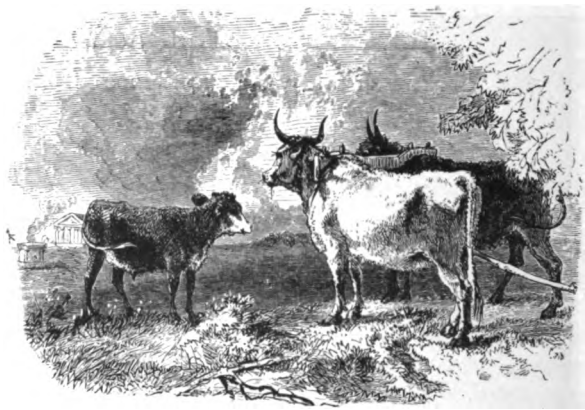

FABLE LII.

THE WANTON CALF.

A CALF, full of play and wantonness, seeing the Ox at plough, could not forbear insulting him. "What a sorry, poor drudge you are," says he, "to bear that heavy yoke upon your neck, and go all day drawing a plough at your tail, to turn up the ground for your master; but you are a wretched, dull slave, and know no better, or surely you would not do it. See what a happy life I lead: I go just where I please; sometimes I lie down under the cool shade, sometimes frisk about in the open sunshine; and, when I please, slake my thirst in the clear, sweet brook; but you, if you were to perish, have not so much as a

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little dirty water to refresh you." The Ox, not at all moved with what he said, went quietly and calmly on with his work; and, in the evening, was unyoked and turned loose. Soon after which, he saw the Calf taken out of the field, and delivered into the hands of a priest, who immediately led him to the altar, and prepared to sacrifice him. His head was hung round with fillets of flowers, and the fatal knife was just about to be applied to his throat, when the Ox drew near and whispered him to this purpose: "Behold the end of your insolence and arrogance; it was for this only you were suffered to live at all. And pray now, friend, whose condition is best, yours or mine?"

MORAL. Youth and folly are frequent companions.

APPLICATION. Be merry and wise. Fun and playfulness are natural to youth. Boys will be boys, and sometimes, in the very exuberance of their spirits, without intention of harm, fall into mischief. They never more forget themselves than when they make a joke of things sacred, fail in respect to their superiors in age or station, ridicule those in affliction and distress, or despise the counsels of the aged and experienced. The fable affords a warning against

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this spirit of heedlessness, and is designed to point out, that ill-timed jokes and unworthy jests upon their betters will recoil on the heads of those who make them.

Too late the forward youth shall find,
Jokes often are repaid in kind.

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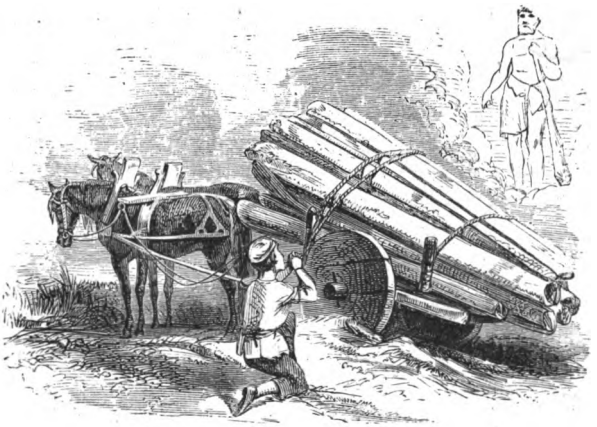

FABLE LIII.

HERCULES AND THE CARTER.

As a Carter was driving his loaded wagon along a deep miry lane, the wheels stuck so fast in the clay, that the horses could not draw them out. Upon this he fell on his knees and prayed to Hercules to come and help him. Hercules, looking down from a cloud, bid him not lie there like an idle rascal as he was, but get up, whip his horses stoutly, and clap his own shoulder to the wheel; adding, that this was the only way for him to obtain his assistance.

MORAL. Heaven helps those only who help themselves.

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APPLICATION. No one is willing to help a person who does not help himself. To do so would be lost labour,—a writing upon water, a sowing upon sand, a watering a brick. If we would expect our prayers to be heard, we must labour to prosper, and pray as well as work; or, as the Spanish proverb quaintly says:

Pray to God devoutly,
Hammer away stoutly.

See first that the design is wise and just;
That ascertained, pursue it resolutely.
Do not for one repulse forego the purpose
That you resolved to effect.

The pleasing way is not the right;
They that would conquer heav'n, must fight.

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FABLE LIV.

THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS.

In former days there was a quarrel among the Members of the human body. Each part professed itself to be indignant at being obliged to work for the Belly, which remained idle and enjoyed the fruits of their labour. They one and all resolved to rebel, and to grant him supplies no longer, but to let him shift for himself as well as he could. The Hands protested that they would not lift up a finger to keep him from starving. The Mouth wished he might never speak again if he took in the least bit of nourishment for him as long as he lived. The teeth said, May we be rotten if ever we chew a morsel for

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him for the future! This solemn league and covenant was kept as long as anything of that kind can be kept, which was until each of the rebel Members pined away to the skin and bone, and could hold out no longer. Then they found there was no doing without the Belly, and that, as idle and insignificant as he seemed, he contributed as much to the maintenance and welfare of all the other parts, as they did to his.

MORAL. None for themselves are born.

APPLICATION. This fable is celebrated as having been the means of appeasing a serious revolt and sedition in a crisis of peculiar danger to the Roman State. The many wars in which the Republic had been engaged, and the severity of the burdens imposed on the people, had so inflamed the minds of the populace, that they moved from Rome in a body and encamped on the Mons Sacer, at a distance from the city, and, threatening to leave the country, obstinately refused to pay the taxes which were levied upon them. Menenius Agrippa, the consul, and general of the Roman Armies, went out at the request of the senate to remonstrate with his countrymen. He brought them to reason by the narration of this fable. It is easy to see its application. For if the branches and members of a community refuse the government that aid which its neccessities require, the whole must

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perish together. The story is of universal use. As the members of the human body have each their own function to discharge, so that no member of it can dispense with the service of the other, in like manner the connection of every class of society is required to the support and well-being of the whole. The sovereign is necessary as the pilot in the ship—who, though he never touches a rope, contributes to the safety of the vessel. The rich and the poor, the capitalist and the workman, render benefits to each other, and promote each other's welfare. In fact, the union of all classes is necessary to that maintenance of authority, respect for the public law, and stability of government, on which the safety of property to individuals and the continuance of the national prosperity alike depend.

The rich the poor, the poor the rich, should aid:
None can protect themselves by their own shade.

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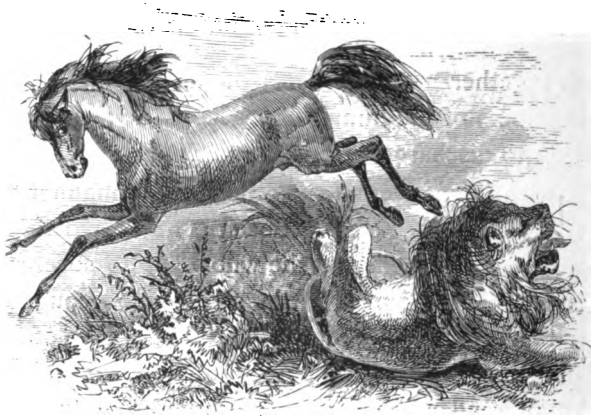

FABLE LV.

THE HORSE AND THE LION.

A LION, seeing a fine plump Colt, had a great inclination to eat him, but knew not which way to get him into his power. At last he bethought himself of this contrivance: he gave out that he was a physician, who, having gained experience by his travels into foreign countries, had made himself capable of curing any sort of malady or distemper incident to any kind of beast; hoping by this stratagem to find an opportunity to execute his design. The Horse, who suspected the trick, was resolved to be even with him; and so, humouring the thing as if he had no suspicions, he visited the Lion, and

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prayed him for his advice in relation to a thorn he had got in his foot, which had quite lamed him, and gave him great pain and uneasiness. The Lion readily agreed, and desired he might see the foot. Upon which the Horse lifted up one of his hind legs, and while the Lion pretended to be poring earnestly upon his hoof, gave him such a kick in the face as quite stunned him, and left him sprawling upon the ground. In the mean time the Horse trotted away, neighing and laughing merrily at the success of the trick, by which he had defeated the purpose of one who intended to have tricked him out of his life.

MORAL. Over-craftiness defeats its own ends.

APPLICATION. This fable illustrates a class of persons often met with in the various ranks of human society. There are some men who speak fair, but mean foul; whose words are honey, but their actions gall; who wound while they flatter; who seek confidence in order to betray; who cover with their wings while they attack with their beaks. These men are well represented by the Lion in this story; and when they meet his fate, it is a matter of rejoicing. Every one is glad to see a knave caught in his own trap:

'Tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard.

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It is pleasant to outshoot a man with his own bow. He that playeth a wily trick beguileth himself. The event is often different to the intent.

Defeating our intent and expectation—
In strange reverse of that we think to see—
When certain most, we find ourselves mistaken,
And he is caught who would the catcher be.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!

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FABLE LVI.

THE HUSBANDMAN AND THE STORK.

THE Husbandman set a net in his fields to take the cranes and geese which came to feed upon the new-sown barley. He succeeded in taking several, both cranes and geese, and among them a Stork, who pleaded hard for his life, and, among other apologies which he made, alleged that he was neither goose nor crane, but a poor harmless Stork, who performed his duty to his parents to all intents and purposes, feeding them when they were old, and, as occasion required, carrying them from place to place upon his back. "All this may be true," replied the Husbandman; "but, as I have taken you in bad company,

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and in the same crime, you must expect to suffer the same punishment."

MORAL. Evil companions are dangerous.

APPLICATION. He who excuses himself, accuses. Among the temptations incident to youth, none is more common than evil companionship. The choice of friends is a matter of the greatest consequence, and it is to be remembered that they who are most worth knowing are the most shy and reserved in admitting new acquaintances to their intimacy. It is better to be alone than in bad company. Be careful, then, in making friends. He who touches pitch will be defiled; and he who is found among thieves must not be surprised if he is taken for a thief. Ill company proves more than fair professions. Tell me where you go, and I will tell you what you do. Birds of a feather flock together.

Who friendship with a knave has made,
Is judged a partner in the trade

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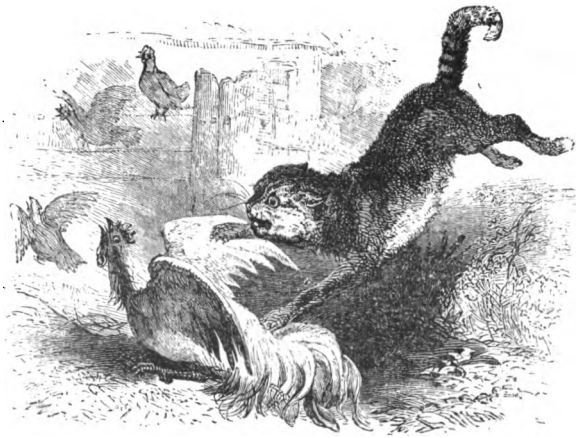

FABLE LVII.

THE CAT AND THE COCK

THE Cat, having determined in his mind to make a meal of the Cock, seized him one morning by surprise, and asked him what he could say for himself, why slaughter should not pass upon him. The Cock replied, that he was serviceable to mankind by crowing in the morning, and calling them up to their daily labour. "Ah, villain," says the Cat, "that is the very objection that I have against you; you make such a shrill, impertinent noise, that people cannot sleep for you. Such interruptions to quiet people's slumbers are not to be borne. Your own confessions declare that you are no longer fit to live."

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MORAL. To a mind bent on evil, any excuse will serve.

APPLICATION. The cat in this fable is by no means an amiable character; and yet it is no want of charity to say that its counterpart is to be found among men. There are some persons so given over to their passions, that they hesitate at no wrong to secure their indulgence; and if a neighbour or friend stand in their way, will sacrifice them without scruple. An old adage says, When we have determined to beat a dog, the first hedge we come to will furnish a stake for the purpose. To that saying this fable corresponds, and shows that when a man is determined to do evil, any opportunity will provide him with a sufficient excuse.

Who most would act according to his will,
Requires most to be restrained from ill.

Precedents still abound, where magistrates would judge ill:
Who seeks to beat the hound, can always find the cudgel.

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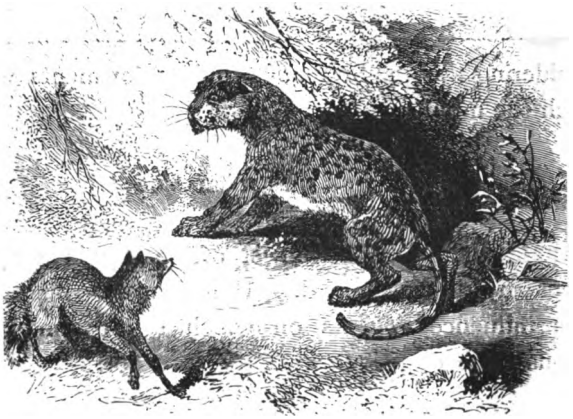

FABLE LVIII.

THE LEOPARD AND THE FOX.

THE Leopard one day began to boast of the great variety and beauty of his spots, and to declare that he saw truly no reason why even the lion should take place of him, since he could not show so beautiful a skin. As for the rest of the wild beasts of the forest, he treated them all, without distinction, in the most haughty, disdainful manner. But the Fox being among them, went up to him with a great deal of spirit and resolution, and told him that he was mistaken in the value he was pleased to set upon himself; since people of judgment were not used to form their opinion of merit from an outside appearance, but by

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considering the good qualities and endowments with which the mind was stored.

MORAL. Handsome is that handsome does.

APPLICATION. The power of beauty is a spell universally acknowledged. It has on several occasions influenced events on which the destinies of nations were dependent.

> Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
> And beauty draws us with a single hair.

But the power of beauty is at all times temporary and evanescent, and affords no foundation for pride or self-elation.

The fable seeks to establish the superiority of virtue and of mental accomplishments to the charms of personal beauty.

> But there is a beauty yet
> Far more lasting in the wear,—
> That which virtue doth beget,—
> Fadeless, bright, beyond compare.

> A clown in his dress may be honester far
> Than a courtier who struts in his garter and star.

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FABLE LIX.

THE SHEPHERD'S BOY.

A CERTAIN Shepherd's Boy kept his sheep upon a common, and in sport and wantonness would often cry out, "The wolf! the wolf!" By this means he several times drew the husbandmen in an adjoining field from their work; who, finding themselves deluded, resolved for the future to take no notice of his alarm. Soon after, the wolf came indeed. The Boy cried out in earnest; but no heed being given to his cries, the sheep were devoured by the wolf.

MORAL. Jesting lies bring serious sorrows.

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APPLICATION. There is no fault from which an honourable mind will more shrink in abhorrence and detestation than from the speaking a falsehood. Truth is as essential to a gentleman as the polish on his sword to an officer on parade. The slightest deviation from the truth, even to the millionth part of one poor scruple, whether by amplitude, suppression, or equivocation, is to be carefully avoided. Our conversation should be after the measure of the oath administered in our courts of law,—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The moral enforced in this fable would point out the evils of a departure from the truth by showing that a liar, even though he occasionally speaks the truth, will not be believed. His false tongue entails on him the loss of the respect and confidence of his neighbours.

Dare to be true : nothing can need a lie ;
A fault which needs it most, grows two thereby.

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FABLE LX.

THE FOX AND THE GOAT.

A Fox, having tumbled into a well, had been contriving for a long while, to no purpose, how he should get out again ; when at last a Goat came to the place, and, wanting to drink, asked Reynard whether the water was good. "Good!" says he ; "ay, so sweet, that I am afraid I have surfeited myself, I have drunk so abundantly." The Goat upon this, without any more ado, leaped in ; and the Fox, taking the advantage of his horns, as nimbly leaped out, leaving the poor Goat at the bottom of the well to shift for himself.

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MORAL. Use your friend as a friend deserves.

APPLICATION. In the whole course of these fables there is not one more truly descriptive of human character than this very clever substitution effected by the Fox of the Goat for himself in the place of peril. An undue simplicity, an over-trustfulness, a freedom from suspicion, an unwillingness to think evil, a too easy belief in the honesty of all men, is the attribute of some minds. The man of this stamp, too honest to do a wrong himself to a neighbour or friend, cannot believe that any one will injure him, and thus, like the Goat in this story, becomes too often the victim to a craft and treachery which he can neither condescend to, realize, nor understand. It indeed generally happens that when the rogue and honest man come in contact, the rogue wins, and enriches himself at the expense of his more scrupulous and conscientious neighbour. The speculator who protects himself by palming off a bad bargain on an unsuspecting and less well-informed friend; the schoolboy who leads a fellow-companion into a scrape, and contrives that he alone should bear all the blame; or the individual, whoever he may be, who extricates himself from a disadvantageous position at the expense of an over-trusting friend whom he deceives,—are all examples of the tact of the author in the discrimination of human character displayed in this fable.

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Craft, indeed, at all times borders on knavery, which the honourable man neither wants nor uses. "Clear and round dealing," says Lord Bacon, "is the honour of man's nature: while a mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver; it may make the metal work better, but it embaseth it."

Hast thou a friend as heart may wish at will?
Then use him so, to have his friendship still.

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FABLE LXI.

CUPID AND DEATH.

CUPID, one sultry summer's noon, tired with play and faint with heat, went into a cool grotto to repose himself, which happened to be the cave of Death. He threw himself carelessly down on the floor ; and his quiver turning topsy-turvy, all the arrows fell out, and mingled with those of Death, which lay scattered up and down the place. When he awoke, he gathered them up as well as he could, but they were so intermingled that he could not rightly distinguish them ; and he took up some of the arrows which belonged to Death, leaving several of his own in their place. This is the cause that we now and then see the hearts of the old and decrepit transfixed with the

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bolts of Love, and, with equal grief and surprise, behold fair youths and maidens smitten with the darts of Death.

MORAL. Death devours lambs as well as sheep.

APPLICATION. The introduction and presence of evil in the world is the most mysterious problem that can occupy the intellect of man. Two questions in regard to it will continually occur. If the Divine Being could prevent evil, and did not, where was His goodness? If He could not prevent evil, where was His power? The only answer which can be made to these questions is this: that it pleased the Divine Being to permit evil, that out of that evil might eventually be produced greater good than if the evil had never been permitted. The Christian moralist can give sufficient reasons for the anomaly which perplexed the thoughts of the author of this fable, and caused him to invent this singular intermingling of the arrows of Cupid and the darts of Death to account for the young being made the victims of an early death, while the aged are spared to indulge in thoughts and plans more peculiar to youth. The liability of the young to die is attended with this advantage, that it tends to check the heedlessness of youth, and to encourage the dedication of the early years to virtue rather than to vice.

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Those that die young are said even by heathen moralists to have been the favourites of the gods. One of our living poets has written,—

> Death cannot come
> To him untimely who is fit to die :
> The less of this cold world, the more of heaven ;
> The briefer life, the earlier immortality.

There is another reason to be considered. The affection of parents for their children is increased by the helplessness and dependence of their infancy, and by the exercise of that constant watchfulness required for the preservation of their life. If, as a universal rule, young persons were exempt from the penalty of death, then would there be a less call on the exertion of the parent, and a proportionate loss of the pleasure derived from witnessing the health and well-being of their children. As there is no rose without a thorn, no light without a shadow, so there is no happiness but what arises out of this very presence of evil of which complaint is made.

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out.

It may further be shown that Death itself is a source of blessing to man as he is at present constituted. Life, subject to the pains, miseries, distresses, and imbecilities of an old age that would never end, would be an intolerable burden. Man

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made immortal in his present state of human weakness, would himself pray for release as the best boon that could be granted him. And when the sting of Death is removed by the agency of a Divine Helper, and the hope of living again in a future state, where there will be a mutual recognition of friends departed, and a perfect personal consummation and bliss both in body and soul, lightens the darkness of the tomb, then may the rider on the pale white horse be welcomed as a friend and deliverer rather than be feared as a King of Terrors.

> And have I been complaining, then, so long?—
> Complaining of His favours, pain and death?
> Who without pain's advice would e'er be good?
> Who without death but would be good in vain?
> Pain is to save from pain; all punishment
> To make for peace; and death to save from death.

> And taught by these, confess th' Almighty just;
> And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust.

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FABLE LXII.

THE OLD MAN AND HIS SONS.

An Old Man had several Sons, who were constantly quarrelling with each other. When the Father had exerted his authority, and used all possible means to reconcile them, to no purpose, he at last had recourse to this expedient. He ordered his Sons to be called before him, and a bundle of sticks to be brought; and then commanded them, one by one, to try if, with all their might and strength, they could any of them break it. They all tried, but to no purpose; for the sticks being closely and compactly bound up together, it was impossible for the force of man to break them. After this, the Father ordered

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the bundle to be untied, and gave a single stick to each of his Sons, at the same time bidding him try to break it; which when each did with all imaginable ease, the Father addressed himself to them to this effect: "O my Sons, behold the power of unity! For if you, in like manner, would but keep yourselves strictly united in the bonds of friendship, it would not be in the power of any mortal to hurt you; but when once the ties of brotherly affection are broken, and you are divided by quarrels, you will fall a prey to your enemies, and deprive yourself of the success which mutual help would give you."

MORAL. Quarrelsome dogs come halting home.

APPLICATION. It is a common observation, that the children of large families succeed the best in life. The secret of their well-doing may lie in the assistance one brother is enabled to render to another. However this may be, the design of the fable cannot be mistaken. It is intended to show the evils of family disunion. Quarrels are at all times odious: how much more so when they take place among those bound by the ties of blood, duty, nature, relationship, and self-interest to be the allies and protectors of each other!

If social comforts be thy care,
Learn this short lesson: "Bear—forbear."

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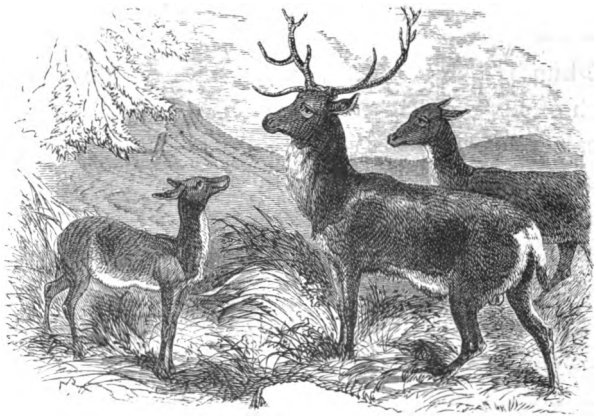

FABLE LXIII.

THE STAG AND THE FAWN.

A STAG, grown old and mischievous, was, according to custom, stamping with his foot, butting with his head, and bellowing so terribly, that the whole herd quaked for fear of him ; when one of the little Fawns, coming up, addressed him to this purpose : "Pray, what is the reason that you, who are so stout and formidable at all other times, if you do but hear the cry of the hounds, are ready to fly out of your skin for fear ?"—"What you observe is true," replied the Stag, "though I know not how to account for it ; I am indeed vigorous, and able enough, I think, to withstand every enemy, and often resolve with myself

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that nothing shall ever dismay my courage for the future; but, alas! I no sooner hear the cry of the hounds, but all my spirits fail me, and I cannot help making off as fast as ever my legs can carry me."

MORAL. Nature is stronger than art.

APPLICATION. Habits long persevered in prevail with the force of a second nature. As the Stag in this story retained his cowardice even to his old age, so it is to be feared the majority of mankind retain to their later days the dispositions and habits of their youth. Hence so many examples are to be found of the ruling passion strong in death, of which the following anecdote will furnish a good example. A rich usurer in Spain being at the point of death, his confessor placed before him a massive silver crucifix, and was about to begin his exhortations, when the dying man, fixing his eyes on the silver image, faltered out, "Sir, I cannot lend you much on that." Most men, at some time or other, make good resolutions, and yet, after all,—

Resolve, and re-resolve, then die the same.

Try what we can, do what we will,
Yet nature will be nature still.

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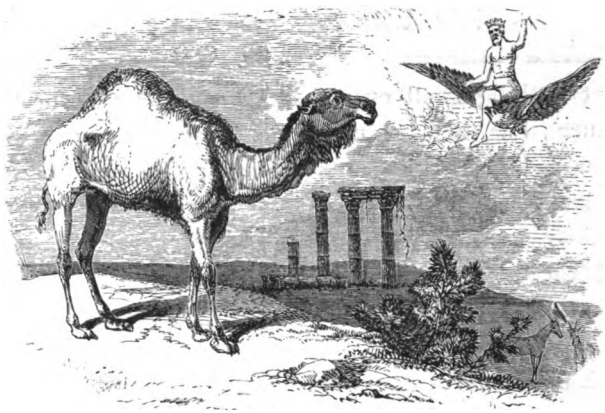

FABLE LXIV.

JUPITER AND THE CAMEL.

THE Camel presented a petition to Jupiter, complaining of the hardships of his case, in not having, like bulls and other creatures, horns, or any weapons of defence to protect himself from the attacks of his enemies ; and prayed that relief might be given him in such manner as might be thought most expedient. Jupiter rejected the petition, and told him that, so far from granting his unreasonable request, henceforward he would take care his ears should be shortened, as a punishment for his presumptuous importunity.

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MORAL. Man does not always know what is best for his own happiness.

APPLICATION. A system of compensation prevails throughout the kingdom of nature. Every animal is wonderfully suited for the position it is to fill, and for the uses to which it is designed. The Camel affords a remarkable instance of this adaptation. By its broad and spongy foot, its double stomach, and its prolonged endurance of thirst, it is precisely suited for its duties as the "ship of the desert." Without its aid, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa could not be traversed, and whole districts of the earth would be isolated from communication with each other. Any alteration of its form would disqualify it for its peculiar place among the works of the Creator as the servant of man and the administrator to his wants. The conduct of the Camel in the fable offers a word of caution to those who indulge in unreasonable wishes, and who desire supposed blessings, which, if granted them, would not only tend to increase their own unhappiness, but render them unfit to discharge efficiently their relative duties to society.

If Happiness have not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest.

It is a source of consolation in the troubles of life

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to believe in a particular providence, and to trace in the connection of the past events of the individual life proofs of a divine superintendence.

> There's a Divinity doth shape our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.

The sun shines still, though it be for a time eclipsed by clouds and darkness. Oftentimes calamities and afflictions prove the heralds and harbingers of blessings.

> With steadfast zeal thy path of duty run;
> God never does nor suffers to be done
> But what thyself would do, couldst thou but see
> Through all the events of life as well as He.

> Whether with reason or with instinct blest,
> Know, all enjoy that power which suits them best.

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FABLE LXV.

THE PEACOCK'S COMPLAINT.

THE Peacock presented a memorial to Juno, complaining that he was hardly used in not having so good a voice as the nightingale, whose sweet notes were agreeable to every ear that heard them; while he himself was laughed at for his ugly, screaming noise, if he did but open his mouth. The goddess, concerned at the uneasiness of her favourite bird, answered him very kindly to this purpose: "If the nightingale is blessed with a fine voice, you have the advantage in beauty and personal appearance."—"Ah," says he, "but what avails my silent, unmeaning

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beauty, when I am so far excelled in voice?" The goddess dismissed him, bidding him consider that the properties of every bird were differently appointed: to him beauty had been assigned; to the eagle, strength; to the nightingale, a voice of melody; to the parrot, the faculty of imitation; and to the dove, innocence. Each of these was contented with his own peculiar quality; and unless he had a mind to be miserable, he must learn to be so too.

MORAL. Contentment is the source of every joy.

APPLICATION. Men differ as widely from each other in their inward gifts and graces as they do in the colour of their hair or the height of their stature. Each one enjoys some special talent, giving him a facility of language, numbers, music, drawing, eloquence, powers of reflection, or skill in organization, by which he may discharge the duties of his station and obtain honour in the state of life in which he is placed. Yet many seem to think slightly of their own gifts, while they covet those possessed by their neighbours. The complaint of the Peacock, like the petition of the Camel in the preceding fable, is intended to rebuke this failing of discontent, which arises from our vain desires rather than from our real wants, and which has supplied to the poets and

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moralists of all ages a continual theme for censure and animadversion.

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason,—man is not a fly.

The humblest being born is great,
If true to his degree;
His virtue illustrates his fate,
Whatever that may be.
Then let us daily learn to love
Simplicity and worth;
For not the eagle, but the dove,
Brought peace unto the earth.

Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part: there all the honour lies.

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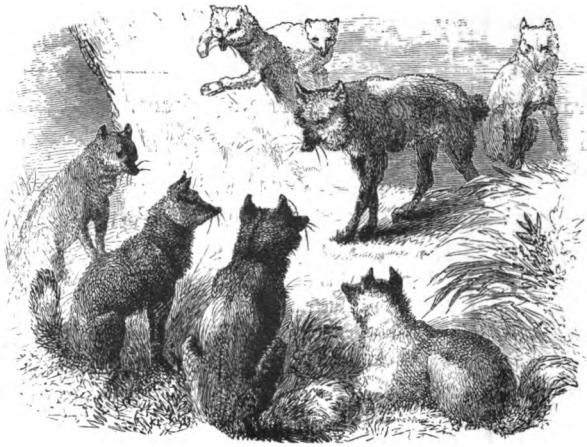

FABLE LXVI.

THE FOX WITHOUT A TAIL.

A FOX being caught in a steel trap by his tail, was glad to escape with the loss of it. On coming abroad into the world, he began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than left it behind him. However, to make the best of a bad matter, he called an assembly of foxes, and proposed that they should all dock their tails, as a fashion which would be very agreeable and becoming. He made a long harangue upon the unprofitableness of tails in general, and endeavoured chiefly to show the awkwardness and inconvenience of a fox's brush in

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particular; adding, that it would be both more graceful and more expeditious to be altogether without them; and that, for his part, what he had only imagined and conjectured before, he now found by experience; for that he never enjoyed himself so well, or found himself so easy, as he had done since he cut off his tail. He said no more, but looked about him with a brisk air, to see what proselytes he had gained; when a sly old fox in the company, who saw through the reasons of his advice, answered him with a smile, "I believe you may have found it convenient to escape from the trap with the loss of your tail; and when we are in the same circumstances, perhaps we may do so too."

MORAL. Do not be led into mischief by the example of your friends.

APPLICATION. A singular but common trait of human nature is illustrated in this fable. Men who fall into errors or misfortunes are often found, by a strange infatuation, to be pleased if others are involved in the same calamities as themselves. The old Latin proverb,—

Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris,

exactly describes this idiosyncrasy. The Fox exerts his eloquence in vain. This fable teaches the young

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to avoid rather than to imitate those who, by their own previous bad conduct, prove themselves to be unfitted to give advice, and to comply with their friends no further than conscience approves.

Example is a living law, whose sway
Men more than all the written laws obey.

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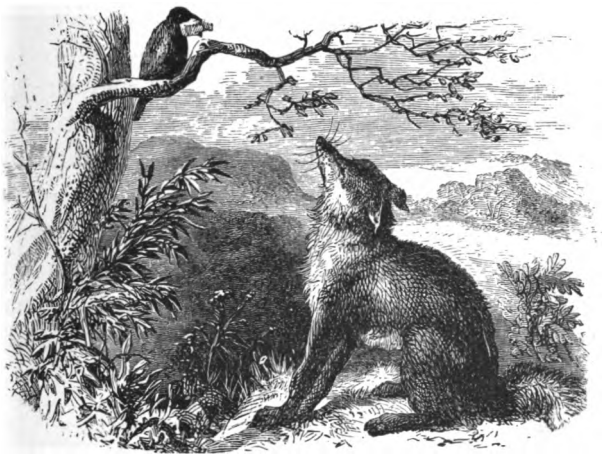

FABLE LXVII.

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

A CROW having taken a piece of cheese out of a cottage-window, flew up into a high tree with it, in order to eat it; which a Fox observing, came and sat underneath, and began to compliment the Crow upon her beauty. "I protest," says he, "I never observed it before, but your feathers are of a more delicate white than any thing I ever saw in my life! Ah! what a fine shape and graceful turn of body is there! And I make no question but you have a tolerable voice! If it is but as fine as your complexion, I do not know a bird that can pretend to stand in competition with you." The Crow, tickled

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with this very civil language, nestled and wriggled about, and hardly knew where she was ; but, thinking the Fox a little dubious as to the particular of her voice, and having a mind to set him right in that matter, began to sing, and, in the same instant, let the cheese drop out of her mouth. This being what the Fox wanted, he snapped it up in a moment, and trotted away, laughing to himself at the easy credulity of the Crow.

MORAL. Flattery finds favour.

APPLICATION. The love of praise is natural to man. It is an instinct implanted in his frame by the Author of his being, as a stimulus prompting him to attain to what is noble and great, and thereby to secure the approbation of the worthy and good. The perversion of this instinct is a proneness to be pleased with flattery, or the too readily listening to praises carrying with them internal evidence to their being undeserved, by the extravagance of the language in which they are framed, or by the clearly shown self-interested motives of those by whom they are offered. The author has displayed his usual excellent judgment, and deep acquaintance with human nature, in the construction of this fable. The Crow is represented as yielding to the flattery so cleverly and adroitly administered. There are very few who do

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not, after her example, experience pleasure in hearing their own actions well spoken of, even by persons whose opinion they may secretly care little for. The flatterer, whenever discovered, is despised; yet flattery will to all time find favour. According to the proverb, flatterers will sit in the parlour, while honest men are turned out of doors. Compliments cost nothing, but many pay dear for them.

'Tis an old maxim in the schools,
That flattery is the food of fools;
Yet now and then your men of wit
Will condescend to take a bit.

All-potent flattery! universal lord!
Reviled, yet courted; censured, yet adored.

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FABLE LXVIII.

THE OLD HOUND.

An Old Hound, who had been a very excellent one in his time, and given his master great sport and satisfaction in many a chase, at last, by the effect of years, became feeble and unserviceable. However, being in the field one day, when the stag was almost run down, he happened to be the first that came in with him, and seized him by one of his haunches; but, his decayed and broken teeth not being able to keep their hold, the deer escaped, and threw him quite out. Upon which his master, being in a great passion, and going to strike him, the honest old creature is said to have barked out his apology: "Ah! do not

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strike your poor old servant; it is not my heart and inclination, but my strength and speed, that fail me. If what I now am displeases you, pray do not forget what I have been."

MORAL. Forget not services.

APPLICATION. The introduction of Christianity into the world effected a great social revolution, and invested with new sanctions all the various mutual relationships of life. The slave was taught no longer to serve his master with the eye-service of fear and self-interest, but with a singleness of heart. The master was enjoined to show kindness to his slave, as admitted into a new society, in which he had equal privileges with himself, and as remembering that he had a Master in heaven. These motives still continue to prevail, and yet animate, in a greater or less degree, the various members of well-regulated families. In such households, the interests of the master are dear to the servant; and the master, in his turn, does not forget the lengthened services of his domestics, but advises them as opportunities may arise, and takes care that, if their services are dispensed with by reason of their increasing infirmities, they are, in old age, neither deserted nor unprovided for.

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Small service is true service, while it lasts;
Of friends, however humble, scorn not one;
The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.

The owner of the Old Hound in this fable will not have many imitators. The instances will be very rare in which a master will allow a faithful servant to want after he has spent the years of his strength and the better part of his life in his service.

Use labourers gently; keep this as a law:
Make child to be civil, keep servant in awe.

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FABLE LXIX.

THE HAWK AND THE FARMER.

A HAWK, pursuing a pigeon over a corn-field with blind eagerness, was caught himself in a net which had been set for crows. A Farmer who was employed not far off, seeing the Hawk fluttering in the net, came and took him ; but, just as he was going to kill him, the Hawk besought him to let him go, assuring him that he was only following a pigeon, and neither intended nor had done any harm to him. To whom the Farmer replied, "And what harm had the poor pigeon done to you?" Upon which he wrung his head off immediately.

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MORAL. Do to others as you would be done by.

APPLICATION. What more perfect standard for the guidance of men in their dealings with each other could be possibly devised than this golden rule of doing to others as they would be done by? This wise and beneficent direction sets up a court of conscience in the human breast, and bids every man to try himself in his conduct towards his neighbour at the bar of that tribunal, and on all occasions to act towards him as he would wish himself to be treated if he were placed in the like circumstances.

To others do—the law is not severe—
What to thyself thou wishest to be done;
Forgive thy foes; and love thy parents dear,
And friends, and native land;—nor those alone:
All human weal and woe learn thou to make thine own.

It is a righteous retribution when the conduct we mete to others is measured back to ourselves. Where villany goes before, vengeance follows after.

What greater praise of God or man than mercy for to show?
Who merciless shall mercy find that mercy show to few?

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FABLE LXX.

THE NURSE AND THE WOLF.

A NURSE, who was endeavouring to quiet a wayward, self-willed child, among other attempts, threatened to throw him out of doors to the Wolf, if he did not leave off crying. A Wolf, who chanced to be prowling near the door just at that time, heard the words, and, believing the woman to be in earnest, waited a long while about the house in expectation of seeing her words made good. But at last the child, wearied with its own importunities, fell asleep, and the poor Wolf was forced to return again to the woods without his expected supper. The Fox meeting him, and surprised to see him going home

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so thin and disconsolate, asked him what was the matter, and how he came to speed no better that night. "Ah, do not ask me," says he; "I was so silly as to believe what the Nurse said, and have been disappointed."

MORAL. Be not too ready to give credence to the assertions of an angry man.

APPLICATION. There is no custom more common, nor at the same time more hurtful and pernicious, than that which prevails among nurses and persons of inferior minds, of telling children false stories and resorting to threats, with the intention of frightening them into good conduct. This habit is sinful in itself, as a departure from the strictness of truth, and is often most fatal in its consequences. There are many well-authenticated instances on record in which a permanent injury in after years has been caused to the child; and many lasting fears, prejudices, and antipathies have arisen from the impressions created in the infant mind by these idle tales and threats. Dean Swift, in his account of the kingdom of Lilliput, relates that "nurses thus misconducting themselves were first soundly scourged, and then expelled from the island." Let it, then, be the first care of mothers or nurses never either to say to a child anything which is not strictly true, nor in a fit

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of anger to indulge in threats which they have no intention to carry out. If they adopt the conduct of this foolish Nurse in the fable, and conjure up an imaginary wolf or ghost to help them in the momentary emergency of a naughty fit, they will probably find, when it is too late, that they have thoughtlessly cowed the spirit of the child, and have planted in his mind thorns and fears which it will be beyond the power of their arguments or philosophy to modify or remove.

> One angry moment often does
> What we repent for years ;
> It works the wrong we ne'er make right
> By sorrow or by tears.

This fable, however, refers to the conduct of the Wolf rather than of the Nurse. It teaches the folly of those who take too much notice of words spoken in a passion. Angry persons say more than they mean, and generally, as soon as the moment of calm reflection comes, are themselves sorry for their violence and indiscretion.

> Oh, how the passions, insolent and strong,
> Bear our weak minds their rapid course along !

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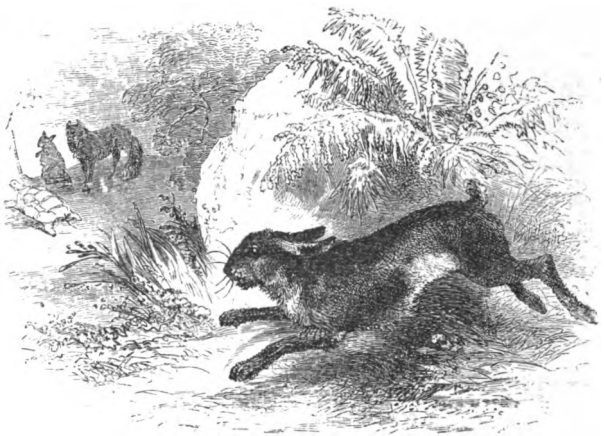

FABLE LXXI.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.

A HARE laughed at a Tortoise upon account of his slowness, and vainly boasted her own great speed in running. "Let us make a match," replied the Tortoise; "I will run with you five miles for a wager, and the fox yonder shall be the umpire of the race." The Hare agreed; and away they both started together. But the Hare, by reason of her exceeding swiftness, outran the Tortoise to such a degree, that she made a jest of the matter; and thinking herself sure of the race, squatted in a tuft of fern that grew by the way, and took a nap, thinking that, if the Tortoise went by, she could at any

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time overtake him with all the ease imaginable. In the mean while the Tortoise came jogging on with slow but continued motion; and the Hare out of a too great security and confidence of victory, oversleeping herself, the Tortoise arrived at the end of the race first.

MORAL. The more haste, the worse speed.

APPLICATION. What a strong confirmation is to be found to the truth of this fable in the ordinary experience of mankind! How often does the Tortoise surpass the Hare! How frequently do we find in schools, either public or private, that the prize is finally carried off, not by the boy of greatest attainment or quickest intellect, but by the boy remarkable at once for his dulness and for his perseverance!

None can the miracles believe,
Dulness and diligence achieve.

In later life the same truth is apparent. Success is more frequently the portion of the steady and laborious than of the strikingly quick or superlatively clever man. Industry is the best talent. The value of a work does not consist in the greater or less time occupied in the progress of it, but in its complete and effectual accomplishment. A sculptor is not applauded for the rapidity with which he uses his chisel, but for the exactness of his likeness and the perfect finish of

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the statue. Under the conviction of these truths, Sir Amias Pawlet used to say, "Stay awhile, to make an end the sooner;" and the Lord Chancellor Eldon chose as the motto of his sergeants' rings the saying (which was also the favourite apothegm of the Roman orator Cato), "Sat cito si sat bene." To this agrees the French proverb, "Pas à pas on va bien loin." On the contrary, it is said, "Haste trips up its own heels." He that decides in haste will repent at leisure.

If what shone afar so grand,
Turn to nothing in thy hand,
On again: the virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize.

A slow, sure, and steady pace
In the long run will win the race.

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FABLE LXXII.

THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS CAT.

A CAT, having fallen in love with a Young Man, besought Venus to change her into a girl, in the hope of gaining his affections. The goddess metamorphosed her into a maiden, and the Young Man married her as his wife. As they were sitting in their chamber, Venus, wishing to know whether in changing her form she had also changed her nature, set down a mouse before her. The bride, forgetful of her husband, started from her couch, and pursued the mouse as if she would have eaten it on the spot; whereupon the goddess, provoked at her conduct, turned her into

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a Cat again, that her manners and person might be consistent with each other.

MORAL. Nature surpasses nurture.

APPLICATION. The attempt to define the laws under which the human mind acts, or to explain the origin and association of human ideas, has baffled the speculations and exceeded the intellect of the wisest and most thoughtful philosophers. It must be sufficient to know that the mind is the seat of human happiness.

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

The problem to be solved is the reconciliation of the freedom of the human will with the evident control and force induced from inveterate habits, which bind the soul with the strength of an adamantine chain. This fable sets forth the power of long-continued habit over the mind, and shows the difficulty of correcting or counteracting a course of conduct which has obtained the force of a second nature through a long career of self-indulgence.

> Naturam expelles furcâ tamen usque recurret.

> The ruling passion, be it what it will,—
> The ruling passion conquers reason still.

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FABLE LXXIII.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

AN Ass finding the skin of a Lion, put it on; and, going in this disguise into the woods and pastures, threw all the flocks and herds into a terrible consternation. At last, meeting his owner, he would have frightened him also; but the good man seeing his long ears stick out, at once knew him, and with a good cudgel made him sensible that, notwithstanding his being dressed in a Lion's Skin, he was really no more than an Ass.

MORAL. Men should be what they seem to be.

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APPLICATION. This fable is designed to describe those who are guilty of vain pretensions, give themselves hectoring airs, and assume to be wiser, richer, more learned, of higher rank, and of more social importance, than they really are. Such persons are ever in danger of being discovered, when they will in a greater or lesser degree be exposed to the ridicule and humiliation incurred by the Ass in the Lion's Skin. The really honest man will in all conditions of life show himself in his true colours, and in his own character. He will not, for the sake of any temporary gain, pretend to be better than he is, and still less for the sake of conciliating evil companions will he condescend to do anything that shall make him appear worse than he is. He will act in the spirit of the homely advice of the Scotch proverb,— "Be the same thing that ye wad be ca'd."

Not every one that goes in red,
And wears a feather in his head,
Must straight a man of war be said.

Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.

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FABLE LXXIV.

THE MOUNTAINS IN LABOUR.

IN a certain district the Mountains reëchoed with strange and unaccountable noises. The country people, much alarmed, came from all parts to see what the cause could be. After they had waited a considerable time in anxious expectation, out crept a Mouse.

MORAL. Do not make much ado about nothing.

APPLICATION. This story is so well known, and so frequently used, that it rises out of the category of a fable, and approaches the intimate familiarity of

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a proverb. It exposes the conduct of those who promise something exceedingly great, and accompany it with a performance ridiculously little. Such persons are continually met with. All those who in their words are loud in offers of help, and never carry them into practical effect; who, with mighty protestations and loud sounding of trumpets, announce and magnify some new invention which, on being tested, is found of no importance; or who unduly raise the expectations of friends and neighbours, only to hurt and disappoint them by impotent conclusions, —are lashed and satirized in this fable. So frequent is its application, that the mere suspicion of a man being likely to promise more than he can perform, causes him to be likened to the mountain in labour for the production of a mouse.

Oh, thoughtless mortals, ever blind to fate!
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.

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FABLE LXXV.

THE SATYR AND THE TRAVELLER.

A SATYR, as he was ranging the forest in an exceeding cold, snowy season, met with a Traveller half starved with the extremity of the weather. He took compassion on him, and kindly invited him home to a warm, comfortable cave he had in the hollow of a rock. As soon as they had entered and sat down, the chilly Traveller, notwithstanding there was a good fire in the place, could not forbear blowing his fingers' ends. Upon the Satyr's asking why he did so, he answered, that he did it to warm his hands. On this his host spread the table before him with dried fruits of several sorts; and having mulled some wine over

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the fire, presented it hot to his shivering guest. On this the Traveller thought fit to blow likewise; and upon the Satyr's demanding a reason why he blew again, he replied, to cool his dish. This second answer provoked the Satyr's indignation so, that he thrust the Traveller out of doors, saying he would have nothing to do with one who blew hot and cold with the same mouth.

MORAL. A double-minded man makes no friends.

APPLICATION. Some men are habitually guilty of the conduct condemned in this fable. Persons, for instance, are to be found who give their friends a cordial welcome in private, but scarcely admit them to speaking terms in public; who are guilty of the meanness of praising a man to his face, and of reviling him behind his back; who express a pleasure in receiving the visit of a neighbour, and yet, ere the door is closed, give directions to their servants to refuse them admittance on the next occasion of their calling. All those who thus act, like the Traveller in the cave of the Satyr, blow hot and cold with one and the same breath. Such conduct merits, and wherever known will excite, indignation or contempt. A "sentiment" once popular at the farmers' ordinaries in and about Gloucester will reflect the lesson taught by this fable:

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Bad luck to the man,—may à never grow fat,—
À carries two faces under one hat !

In the same spirit, a man may blow hot and cold in reference to his own affairs, and be inconsistent with himself. On the one day he may be inflamed with the most excessive zeal to promote some favourite scheme, occupation, or pursuit, and on the morrow he may regard it with the utmost indifference. Such inconsistency of conduct must be avoided by all who would gain esteem or respect. This fable teaches that a man should strive to be honest in word and deed towards his friends, and true to himself in the diligent application to all that he may undertake.

This, above all : to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Oh, what may man within him hide,
Though angel on the outward side !

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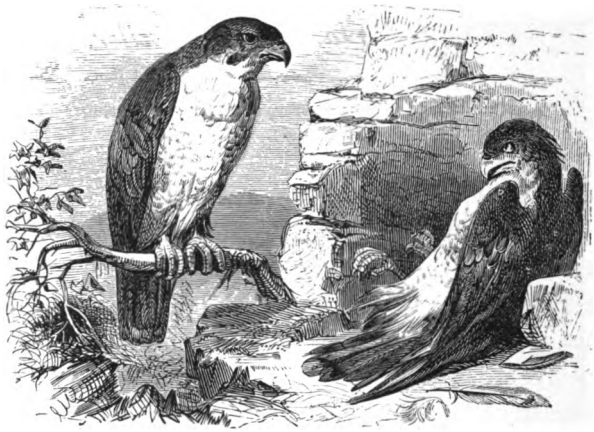

FABLE LXXVI.

THE SICK KITE.

A KITE had been sick a long time, and finding there were no hopes of recovery, begged of his mother to address herself to the gods, and to see what prayers and promises would effect in his behalf. The old Kite replied: "Indeed, dear son, I would willingly undertake anything to save your life; but I despair of doing you any service in the way you propose; for with what face can I ask any thing of the gods in avour of one whose whole life has been a continual scene of rapine and injustice, and who has not scrupled, upon occasion, to rob the very altars themselves?"

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MORAL. Be in health what you will wish you had been when you are sick.

APPLICATION. The reflections which the author places in the mouth of the parent Kite are remarkable for their truth and good sense, and are consistent with the sorrow and seriousness which the contemplation of a death-bed is calculated to produce. It should be our constant endeavour at all times so to act as we shall wish to have done when we are about to die, for the past actions of the life will prove, in most cases, the tormentors or the comforters of the sick man's pillow.

> The child is father of the man ;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

> Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,—
> Our fatal shadows, that walk by us still.

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FABLE LXXVII.

THE HAWK AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A NIGHTINGALE, sitting all alone among the shady branches of an oak, sang with so melodious and shrill a pipe, that she made the woods echo again, and alarmed a hungry Hawk, who was at some distance off watching for his prey; he had no sooner discovered the little musician, but, making a swoop at the place, he seized her with his crooked talons, and bid her prepare for death. "Ah!" says she, "for mercy's sake, don't do so barbarous a thing, and so unbecoming yourself; consider, I never did you any wrong, and am but a poor, small morsel for such a stomach as yours; rather attack some larger fowl,

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which may bring you more credit and a better meal," and let me go."—"Ay!" says the Hawk, "persuade me to it if you can: I have been upon the watch all day long, and have not met with one bit of anything till I caught you; and now you would have me let you go, in hopes of something better, would you? Pray, who would be the fool then?"

MORAL. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

APPLICATION. How crowded, in an advanced state of society, are all the avenues to patronage and promotion! how numerous the suppliants for every office of honour or emolument! Yet it is probable that to every man an opportunity of success is given at some time or other, if only he knew how to use it.

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries;
> And we must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our ventures.

This fable exposes the folly of giving up a certain good for an uncertain gain, and urges the duty of making the most of every present advantage.

> Live! live to-day! To-morrow never yet
> On any human being rose or set.

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FABLE LXXVIII.

THE ANGLER AND THE LITTLE FISH.

A MAN was angling in a river, and after a hard day's toil caught one small perch; which, as he was taking off the hook and putting into his basket, opened its mouth, and began to implore his pity, begging that he would throw it into the river again. Upon the man's demanding what reason he had to expect such a favour,—"Why," says the Fish, "because, at present, I am but young and little, and consequently not so well worth your while as I shall be if you take me some time hence, when I am grown larger."—"That may be," replies the man; "but I am

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not one of those fools who quit a certainty in expectation of an uncertainty."

MORAL. No time like the present.

APPLICATION. This fable is a counterpart of the preceding, and teaches the same lesson. Time past is gone for ever, and never returns. Time future is not, and may never be, ours to use. Time present is all we have at our disposal. It is our duty to make the most of it, and to turn every opportunity to the best advantage. If we neglect to do so, another chance may never occur.

Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offered,
Shall never find it more.

Seize opportunity, avoid delay ;
What may to-day be done, do that to-day.

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FABLE LXXIX.

THE GEESE AND THE CRANES.

A FLOCK of Geese and a covey of Cranes used often to feed together in a wheat-field, as the grain was ripening for harvest. One day, the owner of the field, with his labourers, coming upon them suddenly, surprised them in the very act; and the Geese, being heavy, fat, and full-bodied creatures, were many of them caught; but the Cranes, being thin and light, easily flew away.

MORAL. One does the scath, another has the harm.

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APPLICATION. The apparent partiality of Divine Providence, manifested in the occasional visitings of chastisement on the comparatively innocent, while the more immediate authors of the wrong escape with impunity, has been a source of remark to the moralists of all ages. This mysterious problem, so difficult of solution, seems to form the subject-matter of this fable. The Cranes may be considered as the worst offenders, and most destructive of the corn. They certainly had a less right to a share of the ripening grain than the Geese, who, in their season, will add to the profits of the farm ; yet the former escape, and the latter are taken captive. This unequal incidence of misery and punishment is one of those mysteries which human reason cannot explain, and which must be left to be reconciled hereafter. It affords an argument for a future recompence of reward, which, in the hands of Infinite Justice, will reconcile the inequalities of the existing state.

Then know the truth of government divine,
And let these scruples be no longer thine.

Thus, little rogues submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy their state.

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FABLE LXXX.

THE DOG AND THE SHADOW.

A DOG, crossing a little rivulet with a piece of meat in his mouth, saw his own shadow represented in the clear mirror of the limpid stream; and, believing it to be another dog, who was carrying a larger piece of meat, he could not forbear catching at it; but was so far from getting anything by his greedy design, that he dropped the piece he had in his mouth, which immediately sank to the bottom, and was irrecoverably lost.

MORAL. Catch not at the shadow, and lose the substance.

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APPLICATION. This fable contains a caution against covetousness, or that excessive greed which oftentimes overreaches itself, and misses what it aims at. It is susceptible of a deeper meaning, and of a wider interpretation. It points out the final loss and disappointment of that numerous class of men who are spending their labour on that which cannot satisfy, and who, while perplexing themselves all their lives long with schemes of visionary good, neglect to avail themselves of the many sources of real, substantial happiness which a kind Providence places within their reach.

Some are so mad, they can't endure
To live and love and be secure ;
Projects and pride distract their breast,
Ambition will not let them rest.
These, growing old or wise, complain,
Their foolish labours were in vain.

The biggest things are not the best, the brightest often dross ;
And when we grasp at profit most, we oft get greater loss.

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FABLE LXXXI.

THE ASS AND THE LITTLE DOG.

THE Ass, observing how great a favourite the Little Dog was with his master,—how much caressed and fondled, and fed with good bits at every meal; and for no other reason, that he could perceive, but skipping and frisking about, wagging his tail, and leaping up into his master's lap,—was resolved to imitate the Spaniel, and see whether such a behaviour would not procure him similar favours. Accordingly, the master was no sooner come home from walking about his fields and gardens, and seated in his easy-chair, than the Ass, who observed him, came gambolling and braying towards him in a very awkward manner.

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The master could not help laughing aloud at the odd sight. But his jest was soon turned into earnest, when he felt the rough salute of the Ass's fore-feet, who, raising himself upon his hinder legs, pawed against his breast with a most loving air, and would fain have jumped into his lap. The good man, terrified at this outrageous behaviour, and unable to endure the weight of so heavy a beast, cried out; upon which his servants, running in, belaboured the Ass with their sticks, and soon convinced him that every one who desires it is not qualified to be a favourite.

MORAL. A place for every man, and every man in his place.

APPLICATION. This fable aptly describes a character often to be met with among persons not thoroughly accustomed to the usages of good society, who, by excessive civility, overstrained courtesy, and wearisome pressure of officiousness, render their favours tiresome and unacceptable. Such attentions, while they flatter, sting. All sweets are not wholesome.

> As with the brute, with man no less,
> The friendship of th' uncultured mind
> Is irksome oft, from sheer excess
> Of zeal to do the thing that's kind.

The conduct of the Ass in this fable further reproves

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the folly of those men who undertake offices for which they are not fitted, or who speak oracularly on matters which they do not understand. An amusing story is told of Apelles, the famous Grecian artist. A shoemaker, on seeing one of his pictures, found fault with a portion of the sandal. The painter accepted the criticism, and made the correction suggested. But when the shoemaker, returning to see the alteration, proceeded to find fault with the other parts of the figure, Apelles administered a rebuke which has grown into a proverb—"Ne sutor ultra crepidam." He who is qualified to excel in one profession may be totally unfitted for another. Rash presumption is a ladder which will break the mounter's neck.

What one man does, another fails to do;
What's fit for me may not be fit for you.

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FABLE LXXXII.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A WOLF, after devouring his prey, found a bone stick in his throat, which gave him so much pain, that he went howling up and down, and importuning every creature he met to remove it; nay, he promised a reasonable reward to any one that should relieve him. At last the Crane, tempted with the hope of the reward, and having first made him confirm his promise with an oath, undertook the business, and ventured his long neck into the rapacious fellow's throat. Having plucked out the bone, he asked for the promised gratuity; when the Wolf, turning his eyes disdainfully towards him,

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said, "I did not think you had been so unconscionable. I had your head in my mouth and could have bit it off whenever I pleased, but suffered you to take it away without any damage; and yet you are not contented."

MORAL. No one should risk overmuch his own safety to help another.

APPLICATION. This fable may appear to some persons to be a caricature rather than a picture; yet the author represents in it a true phase of human nature. There are persons to be met with so strangely infatuated with a sense of their own superiority to the rest of mankind, either by their long ancestry or their personal attractiveness, as to consider any service done them to be a due acknowledgment of their superiority. These persons would seem by their conduct to imply that they themselves were conferring a privilege rather than otherwise on those from whom they accept favours, and consider themselves exempt from all need of expressions of gratitude or thankfulness. Many a man has gone out of his way, and done injury to himself, in his desire to assist a friend, while that friend has laughed at him for his pains, and deemed his kindness folly. This fable teaches the imprudence of exposing ourselves to harm for unworthy persons, with the

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expectation of meeting with an adequate return from the persons for whom we expose ourselves to risk. It behoves us to know well the person in whom we place confidence. He who trusts in a man void of any sense of honourable feeling will sooner or later smart for it.

If thou lovest to be charitable, do
So good to others that it hurt not you.

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FABLE LXXXIII.

THE ENVIOUS MAN AND THE COVETOUS.

AN Envious Man happened to be offering up his prayers to Jupiter just in the time and place with a man noted for his covetousness. Jupiter, not caring to be troubled with their importunities himself, sent Apollo to examine the merits of their respective petitions, and to give each such relief as he should think proper. Apollo, therefore, having ascertained their failings, told them that whatever the one asked, the other should have it double. Upon this, the Covetous Man, though he had a thousand things to request, yet forbore to ask first, hoping to receive a double quantity; for he concluded that all men's

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wishes sympathized with his own. By this means the Envious Man had an opportunity of preferring his petition first, which was the thing he aimed at; so, without much hesitation, he prayed to be relieved by having one of his eyes put out; knowing that, of consequence, his companion would be deprived of both.

MORAL. Envy shoots at another, and wounds itself.

APPLICATION. The poets and moralists of all nations have allotted to envy a place among the passions prevailing in the heart of man. This singular affection combines in itself the worst features of jealousy and selfishness, and yet is distinct from either. It is a hatred of others for their excellence, happiness, or reputation; a grief of heart arising from witnessing another's prosperity. It is generally associated with a spirit of the deadliest malignity, amounting in its intensity to the violence of a monomania, and graphically described in this fable. Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, ii., 780) gives a fine description of envy, of which these lines are a translation:—

> Restless in spite, while watchful to destroy,
> She pines and sickens at another's joy;
> Foe to herself, distressing and distressed,
> She bears her own tormentor in her breast.

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Of all the evil inclinations to which humanity is heir, this passion appears to the person not under its sway the meanest and most unaccountable. It seems almost impossible to believe that any human being can wish for evils on a fellow-creature who has not injured him, or can take pleasure in troubles and calamities happening to another, merely because he is happier or more esteemed than himself. Yet such feelings do often occupy the guest-chamber of the soul.

> Few have the fortitude of soul to honour
> A friend's success without a touch of envy;
> For that malignant passion to the heart
> Cleaves sore, and with a double burden loads
> The man infected with it. First, he feels
> In all their weight his own calamities,
> Then sighs to see the happiness of others.

This strange, and at first sight mysterious fable (than which none in the whole cycle of these stories is more true to human nature) exactly describes this passion of envy, which sickens at another's joy. A perfect representation of its workings in the human heart is given by its picture of a man who is willing to lose an eye, that he might cause the loss of both eyes to the object of his envy and dislike.

> The man who envies must behold with pain
> Another's joy, and sicken at his gain.

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FABLE LXXXIV.

THE TWO POTS.

An Earthen Pot and one of Brass, standing together upon the river's brink, were both carried away by the height of the tide. The Earthen Pot showed some uneasiness, as fearing he should be broken; but his companion of Brass bid him be under no apprehensions, for that he would take care of him. "Oh," replies the other, "keep as far off as you can, I entreat you; it is you I am most afraid of: for, whether the stream dashes you against me, or me against you, I am sure to be the sufferer; and therefore, I beg of you, do not let us come near one another."

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MORAL. Do not make all whom you meet friends.

APPLICATION. The interpreters of these fables deduce from this narrative a caution against incongruous and unequal friendships made between men widely separated from each other by wealth and station. It cannot be doubted that a friend is best sought among equals. He should not be too high, lest he expect flattery; nor too low, lest he submit to patronage or oppression. But the true moral, which best adapts itself to all the circumstances of the fable, is to receive it as conveying advice in regard to the treatment of casual acquaintances. The brazen and the earthen vessels were only temporary companions, thrown together by chance. The advice which the author would convey corresponds with the old Latin proverb, "Ne cuivis dexteram injeceris." Offer not your hand to every one you meet. Admit not every passing stranger lightly and unreservedly to your intimacy. The same advice Polonius gives to his son Laertes:—

> The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
> Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel:
> But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
> Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade.

> The quiet friend, all one in word and deed,
> Great comfort is, like ready gold at need.

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FABLE LXXXV.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

THE Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and, being disposed to divert himself at the expense of his guest, provided nothing for the entertainment but a soup, in a wide, shallow dish, which he could lap up with the greatest ease ; but for which the Stork, who could but just dip in the point of his bill, was not a bit the better all the while. The Stork in a few days returned the compliment, and invited the Fox to dinner, but suffered nothing to be brought to table but some minced meat in a glass jar, the neck of which was so deep and so narrow, that all the Fox, who was very hungry, could do, was to lick the

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brims, and to pick up the crumbs as the Stork dropped them in eating. Reynard was heartily vexed at first, but, when he came to take his leave, owned ingenuously that he had been used as he deserved, and that he had no reason to take any treatment ill of which he had himself set the example.

MORAL. Practical jokes are often returned in kind.

APPLICATION. "A good joke bites like a lamb;" it is innocent enough: but practical jokes are always to be avoided. They are generally distinguished by poverty of invention, want of taste, vulgarity of manners, and deficiency of judgment, and too often lead to retaliation, which creates mischief and bad feeling. If they are indulged in, and then repaid in kind, the wisest course is to treat them with the mutual good humour displayed by the parties respectively described in this fable.

> But many times rough jokes such rancour breed,
> That they who laughed at first, soon after bleed.

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FABLE LXXXVI.

THE BEAR AND THE BEE-HIVES.

A BEAR, climbing over the fence into a place where Bees were kept, began to plunder the Hives, and rob them of their honey. But the Bees, to revenge the injury, attacked him in a whole swarm together; and though they were not able to pierce his rugged hide, yet, with their little stings, they so annoyed his eyes and nostrils, that, unable to endure the smarting pain, with impatience he tore the skin over his ears with his own claws, and suffered ample punishment for the injury he did the Bees in breaking open their waxen cells.

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MORAL. Little enemies and little wounds are not to be despised.

APPLICATION. Small troubles often cause much suffering. Petty grievances and minor annoyances sometimes produce more unhappiness than the severer trials of life. Persons are to be met with who bear real afflictions, acute pain, domestic bereavements, and loss of property, with manly courage and noble resolution, and yet, in the daily course of their occupations, permit themselves to be made miserable by things of comparatively little consequence—as the state of the weather, or of public securities, or some temporary derangement of plans, or some petty household difficulty. Such men resemble the Bear suffering from troubles brought on from no worthy cause, but arising from the stings of his puny enemies. The Bear, it may be observed, brought his troubles on himself. The Hive was upset while he indulged in an act of self-gratification, without any reference to the hurt he might cause to its occupants. A little more care for the feelings of others would have saved him from the stings of the Bees and from the sufferings resulting from their attack.

Think much of a trifle, though small it appear;
Small sands make the mountains, and moments the year.

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FABLE LXXXVII.

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE BEAR.

Two Men travelling through a forest together, mutually promised to stand by each other in any danger they should meet upon the way. They had not gone far before a Bear came rushing towards them out of a thicket; upon which one, being a light, nimble fellow, got up into a tree. The other, perceiving that he had no chance single-handed against the Bear, fell flat with his face upon the ground, as if dead, and held his breath. The Bear came up and smelt him; and supposing him to be a dead carcass,

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went back again into the wood without doing him the least harm. When all was over, the Traveller who had climbed the tree came down to his companion, and, with a pleasant smile, asked him what the Bear said to him; "For," says he, "I took notice that he placed his mouth very close to your ear."—"Why," replies the other, "he charged me to tell you that you were a great coward, and that I should take care for the future how I trusted those who made fine promises and yet would not stand by their friends when in danger and difficulty."

MORAL. Trust not fine promises.

APPLICATION. The man of many words is to be suspected. He is too often a mere butterfly flitting about in the summer sunshine of undisturbed prosperity, but disappearing on the first frost of a wintry day, or at the first whisper of adversity. His courage oozes away at the approach of danger. Such is the man described in this fable. He is common enough in society. He is the type of every faithless man who, by fair promises, brings a friend into trouble, and leaves him to extricate himself as best he can. Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better. The fable, in a word, gives a caution against fine promises, and against believing all we hear.

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It points out the imprudence of trusting any one in affairs of importance until sufficient proof has been given of their integrity, truth, talent, and fidelity.

He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need;
If thou sorrow, he will weep;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep:
Thus of every grief in heart,
He with thee doth bear a part.

Man, by too much trust betrayed,
Too often is a victim made.

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FABLE LXXXVIII.

THE TRUMPETER TAKEN PRISONER.

A TRUMPETER being taken prisoner in a battle, begged hard for quarter, declaring his innocence, and protesting that he neither had killed nor could kill any man ; bearing no arms, but only his trumpet, which he was obliged to sound at the word of command. "For that reason," replied his enemies, "we are determined not to spare you ; for though you yourself never fight, yet with that base instrument of yours you blow up animosity between other people, and so become the occasion of much bloodshed."

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MORAL. An accomplice is as guilty as the principal.

APPLICATION. This fable may be illustrated by an amusing episode in English history. Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied Richard Cœur de Lion to the Crusades. The prelate, taken prisoner in a sally by the Saracens, begged his liberty, and to be sent back to his sovereign, as being a priest, and not a soldier. They showed him the breastplate he had worn in the combat, inquired if that was the dress of a prelate or of a paladin, and held him a fast prisoner till he died a captive at Acre. The English law acknowledges the same principle. "Qui facit per alium, facit per se." He that makes another the instrument of his evil intentions, is himself guilty of the wrong committed. There is a very slight difference between the man who holds a candle to, or opens the door for, a thief, and the thief himself. He who blows the coals must expect to be scorched. He who prompts another, is equally responsible with him for the deed done, and must bear a like share in the merit or shame, in the guilt or goodness, of the transaction.

> All hate their faults, and hate of them to hear;
> And faultiest, of fault would seem most clear.

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FABLE LXXXIX.

THE PARTRIDGE AND THE COCKS.

A CERTAIN man having taken a Partridge, plucked some of the feathers out of its wings, and turned it into a poultry-yard, where he kept Game Cocks. The Cocks for a while made the poor bird lead a sad life, continually pecking and driving it away from its food. This treatment was taken more unkindly because offered to a stranger. But at last, observing how frequently they quarrelled and fought with each other, he comforted himself with this reflection,—that it was no wonder they were cruel to him, since there was so much bickering and animosity among themselves.

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MORAL. Those who are unkind to their relations, cannot be depended on as friends.

APPLICATION. No greater happiness is allotted to man on earth than the comforts of a peaceful home and of a united family circle; and there is no greater misery than a fireside worried and made wretched by perpetual jars and dissensions. Home example, too, has a most powerful influence. The child imitates the sayings, doings, and manners of its superiors, and, in the freedom of the play-room, reacts them again with his young companions. What an instrument of evil, therefore, must that home be in which domestic disagreements, personal feuds, and ever-recurrent altercations, continually occur! The hatreds of relatives are proverbially the most bitter and inveterate; and if the child lives in the atmosphere of family disunion, he will naturally learn to be quarrelsome with his equals, and disrespectful to his betters. This fable points out the evils of family quarrels, and attributes the cruelties of these Game Cocks towards a stranger to their frequent onsets and fightings with each other.

Man, whose heaven-erected face
  The smiles of love adorn,—
Man's inhumanity to man
  Makes countless thousands mourn.

When members of a household think lightly of those ties by which God and nature have united them,

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what guarantee have their friends of better treatment at their hands? The wise man will as much as possible avoid intercourse with those who fail in their duties to their own relations, lest he experience, after the example of the Partridge in this fable, disrespect and ill-treatment at their hands.

So perish all whose breasts ne'er learnt to glow
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.

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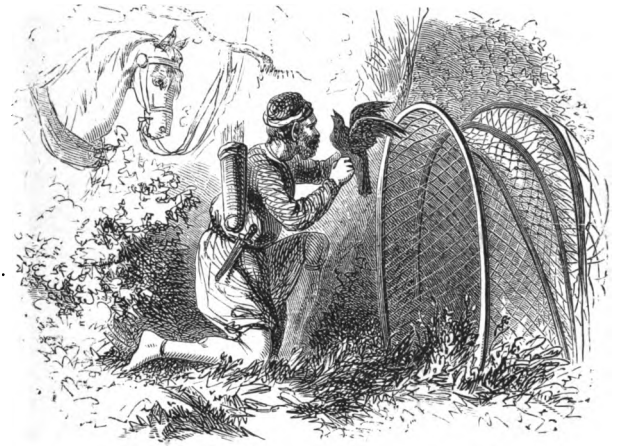

FABLE XC.

THE FALCONER AND PARTRIDGE.

A FALCONER having taken a Partridge in his nets, the bird begged hard for a reprieve, and promised the man, if he would let him go, to decoy other Partridges into his net. "No," replied the Falconer; "I was before determined not to spare you; but now you have condemned yourself by your own words: for he who is such a scoundrel as to offer to betray his friends to save himself, deserves, if possible, worse than death."

MORAL. Better a death of honour than a life of shame.

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APPLICATION. There are certain human actions which the common consent of mankind in all ages and countries, by the promptings of a universal instinct, has stamped with a verdict of repudiation and infamy. Amongst these, the conduct represented in the person of the bird in this fable stands conspicuous. He who could consent to save his own life at the cost of ruin to his country, and of injury to his own friends and countrymen, especially when that ruin is to be compassed by his own active treachery, is deservedly held up to reprobation. Life is a great boon, but it may be too dearly purchased at the price of personal dishonour. It is related of Konrad Vallenrod, the last chief of the order of Teutonic Knights in Lithuania, that he entered the order, and professed great zeal for its interests, and became its Grand Master,—being secretly animated throughout his career with the design of revealing its counsels, betraying its castles, and exposing its armies to their enemies; and that he finally succeeded in thus treacherously effecting its annihilation and destruction. His memory is deservedly held in universal execration. This fable condemns the cowardice which would purchase life at the price of honour; and encourages the noble and unselfish conduct of the man—

> Who knows the wrongs of want to bear,
> E'en in its lowest, last extreme;
> Yet can, with conscious virtue, fear
> Far worse than death a deed of shame.

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In this true patriotism is to be found the best guarantee for the preservation of personal liberty, for the welfare of states, and for the continued independence of nations.

Mine honour is my life- both grow in one ;
Take honour from me, and my life is done.

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FABLE XCI.

THE EAGLE AND THE CROW.

AN Eagle flew down from his eyrie at the summit of a lofty mountain, and fastened his talons into the back of a lamb; and then instantly flying off, bore away into the clouds his bleating prize. A Crow who sat upon a neighbouring elm and beheld the exploit, resolved to imitate it; and so flying down upon the back of a ram, and entangling his claws in the wool, he fell a-chattering and attempting to fly, by which means he attracted the observation of the shepherd; who, finding his feet hampered in the fleece of the ram, easily took him and gave him to his boys for their sport and diversion.

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MORAL. Every man is the son of his own works.

APPLICATION. How easily does this silly Crow delude himself into a belief that he possesses the strength, and can emulate the speed and imitate the example, of the Eagle in his rapacious flight! How surely does he become by his foolish bravado the creator of his own miseries and the author of his own misfortunes! In a similar manner many of the troubles of life are brought on men by their own faults.

> Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
> Our own felicity we make or find.

We should learn from this story to be careful of our actions, under the conviction that these actions have their permanent moral consequences, and tend to promote or to impede success in life.

> Then be not with your present lot deprest,
> But meet the future with undaunted breast.

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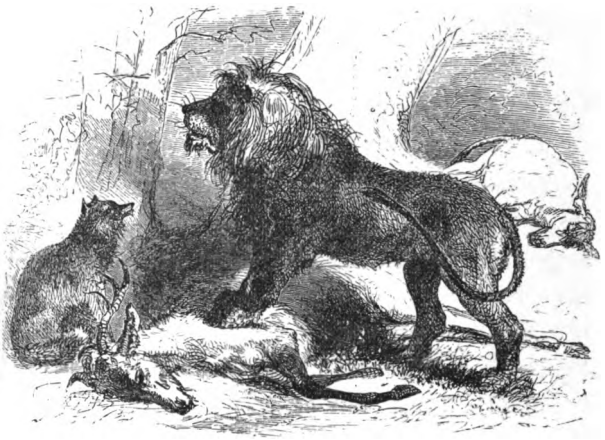

FABLE XCII.

THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX.

THE Lion, the Ass, and the Fox went a-hunting together in the forest, and it was agreed that whatever was taken should be divided amongst them. They soon killed a large fat Stag, which the Lion ordered the Ass to divide. The Ass, according to the best of his capacity, did so, and made three pretty equal shares. But such even doings not suiting at all with the craving temper of the greedy Lion, he without further delay flew upon the poor Ass, and tore him in pieces, and then bade the Fox divide the prey into two parts. Reynard, who seldom wanted a prompter, had, however, his cue given him sufficiently

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upon this occasion; and so, nibbling off one little bit for himself, he laid forth all the rest for the Lion's portion. The royal brute was so delighted at this dutiful and handsome proof of his respect, that he could not forbear expressing the satisfaction it gave him; and asked him, withal, where he could possibly have learnt so proper and so courtly a behaviour. "Why," replies Reynard, "to tell your majesty the truth, I was taught it by the Ass that lies dead there."

MORAL. Forewarned is forearmed.

APPLICATION. The wise man will learn caution and experience from observing the conduct of others. The misfortunes of his neighbours will be warnings to himself. This is the course dictated by prudence and by common sense. He who sees that certain actions are attended with injurious results, and adopts the same himself, deserves to learn by suffering in his own person.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

And truly prudent is that man alone
Who by another's fault amends his own.

Knowledge, when wisdom is too weak to guide her,
Is like a headstrong horse that throws its rider.

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FABLE XCIII.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

A FOX, very hungry, chanced to come into a vineyard, where there hung branches of charming ripe grapes; but nailed up to a trellis so high, that he leaped till he quite tired himself without being able to reach one of them. At last, "Let who will take them!" says he; "they are but green and sour; so I will even let them alone."

MORAL. We should not covet things beyond our reach.

APPLICATION. How often do we see in every-day life this fable exemplified! Men secretly long for

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something beyond their reach, and when they fail to attain it, express for it sentiments of contempt and depreciation. The celebrated French diplomatist Prince Talleyrand is related to have said that language was given to man that he might use it to conceal his thoughts. Certainly the voice of the Fox in this story is no true interpreter of his wishes. He does not express his real convictions. After his example, men frequently seek to lessen to themselves the sting of a present disappointment, by diminishing the value of the object for the attainment of which they labour in vain. Let one example suffice. A man seeks to gain the acquaintance and friendship of another, and, failing to do so, proceeds to disparage and abuse him. This fable should make us careful in believing everything we hear, and distrustful in listening to reports injurious to others. Abuse, if we examine into the matter, may be found, like the speech of the Fox in the fable, to betray the rankling of disappointed hopes, and to savour rather of revenge than of truth. It is impossible to attain to all that we desire. Disappointments are better met by patient endurance and by renewed efforts than by unworthy attempts to depreciate the prize to which we would attain.

> With equal mind, what happens let us bear,
> Nor joy nor grieve for things beyond our care.

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FABLE XCIV.

THE HORSE AND THE STAG.

THE Stag, with his sharp horns, got the better of the Horse, and drove him clear out of the pasture where they used to feed together. So the latter craved the assistance of man; and, in order to receive the benefit of it, suffered him to put a bridle into his mouth and a saddle on his back. By this way of proceeding he entirely defeated his enemy, but was mightily disappointed when, upon returning thanks and desiring to be dismissed, he received this answer: "No, I never knew before how useful a drudge you were; now I have found out what you are good for, you may depend upon it I will keep you to it."

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MORAL. Revenge, though sweet, often ends in bitterness.

APPLICATION. The passion of vengeance—the desire of hurting one from whom hurt has been received, the wish of measuring back wrongs on those who have inflicted them—is a common failing of humanity. This spirit is admirably illustrated in this fable. The Horse is so desirous of revenge on the Stag for driving him from his pastures, that he employs the services of man as his champion and ally, although in doing so he prepares a weapon to be used against himself. Thus, oftentimes, the revengeful man is so determined to secure vengeance on his enemy, that he fails to realize that the means devised for the hurt of another may result in injury to himself.

This fable is further susceptible of a political interpretation. The use of it in this sense is recorded in ancient history. Aristotle * relates that Stesichorus recited this fable to the citizens of Himera, when they were debating whether they should assign a body-guard to their ruler, Phalaris. He gives this fable at length, and then draws from it this conclusion: "And in like manner do you," he says, "look to it, lest in your wish to avenge yourselves of your enemies, you suffer in the same way as the Horse: for

* *Rhetoric*, Book ii., c. 21.

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already, through your choice of a commander with independent power, you have the bit in your mouth; but if you assign him a body-guard, and permit him to mount in the saddle, you will become from that moment the slaves of Phalaris."

The Latin poet Horace introduces this fable into one of his Satires, and deduces from it a caution against a state entrusting to its rulers, in a moment of emergency, powers which may be used to wound and destroy the liberties of the people. The fable teaches alike to statesmen and to people, that an escape from present troubles may be too dearly purchased, if our allies and deliverers, when the occasion of need is past, prove to be our worst enemies, and yet more severe oppressors.

Too noble for revenge, which still we find
The weakest frailty of a feeble mind.

All is not good for all; though all would be
Alike possessors of something they see.

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FABLE XCV.

THE FLYING-FISH AND THE DOLPHIN.

A FLYING-FISH being pursued by a Dolphin, in his eagerness to escape, took too long a flight, and fell upon a rock, where his death was inevitable. The Dolphin, in his keenness of pursuit, ran himself on the shore at the foot of the same rock, and was left gasping by the waves in the same condition. "Well," said the Flying-fish, "I must die, it is true; but I die with pleasure when I behold him who is the cause of my death involved in the same fate."

MORAL. Revenge is sweet.

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APPLICATION. The thirst for revenge, the desire of hurting one from whom hurt has been received, is so natural to man, that it has formed an integral part of the law of various well-regulated communities. Under the Jewish ordinances, an eye was demanded for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The old Roman law sanctioned, by the authority of solemn statutes, the principle of retaliation, by which he who had received an injury was entitled to an equivalent injury being inflicted on the offender. The higher sanctions of an extended revelation alone have taught a purer morality—the return of good for evil, the forgiveness of enemies, the expulsion from the heart of all sentiments of revenge against those who hurt us.

Here lay a wretch, prepared t' exchange
His soul's reversion for revenge.

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FABLE XCVI.

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE SWALLOW.

A YOUNG Prodigal, who had wasted his whole patrimony, was taking a melancholy walk near a brook. It was in the month of January, on one of those warm, sunshiny days which sometimes smile upon us even in that wintry season of the year; and to make it the more like summer, a Swallow, which had made its appearance too soon, flew skimmingly along upon the surface of the stream. The thoughtless Youth observing this, without any further consideration, concluded that summer was now come, and that he should have little or no occasion for his upper

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clothes; so he went and sold them, and spent the money among his idle companions. When this sum was gone, he took another solitary walk in the same place as before. But the weather having changed, and become again severe and frosty, everything bore an aspect very different from what it did before; the brook was now quite frozen over, and the poor Swallow lay dead upon its bank. The sight restored the Young Man to himself; and, coming to a sense of his misery, he reproached himself as the author of all his misfortunes. "Ah, wretch," says he, "thou hast undone thyself in being so credulous as to think that one swallow could make a summer."

MORAL. In fair weather be prepared for foul.

APPLICATION. The Prodigal in this fable is a true character. How many, after his example, live only in the present hour, and, availing themselves to the utmost of every passing enjoyment, think not about the future! Yet the law of moral consequences is imposed on man as the condition of his being. As he sows, he must reap. The misspent youth is the precursor of remorse and self-indignation in later years. No one can tell what a day may bring forth. Many a bright morning is succeeded by clouds and tempest before night. A prudent young man will endeavour to turn his time—the best talent that he

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has—to advantage. Warned by the example of this Prodigal, he will do well to avoid alike his folly and his repentance.

> Fool, giggle on, and waste thy wanton breath;
> Thy morning laughter breeds an evening death.

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FABLE XCVII.

THE MAN AND HIS GOOSE.

A CERTAIN Man had a Goose, which laid him a golden egg every day. Not contented with this good fortune, which rather increased than abated his avarice, he was resolved to kill the Goose, so that he might come at the inexhaustible treasure which he fancied she had within her. He did so, and, to his great sorrow and disappointment, found nothing.

MORAL. Much will always want more.

APPLICATION. Labour is ordained, for wise purposes, to be the normal condition of human life. The

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rightly educated child is taught, in language framed with an equal proportion of sound piety and of sterling good sense, to learn and labour truly to get his own living. Honourable efforts to save something against an evil day are to be commended as acts of prudence, and objects of legitimate ambition. This fable is only designed to caution men against that inordinate thirst for riches, and that insatiable love of money, which degenerates into covetousness. This passion of avarice keeps its victims in perpetual torment. It harasses them with incessant fear lest they should lose what they have, and yet tempts them, under the pressure of a desire for increase, to incur the risk of hazardous ventures and of doubtful speculations. The covetous man, like the Man who slew his Goose that lay the golden eggs, wants more, and, in his eagerness to attain it, loses all. Covetousness bursts the bag, and brings nothing home.

Happy the man, without a wish for more,
Who quietly enjoys his little store;
And knows to Heaven with gratitude to pay
Thanks for what's given and for what's ta'en away.

Foul, cankering rust the hidden treasure frets;
But gold that's put to use, more gold begets.

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FABLE XCVIII.

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

A LEAN, hungry, half-starved Wolf, prowling along for food on a clear moonlit night, fell in with a good-looking and well-fed Mastiff; and after the compliments of meeting were duly passed between them, the Wolf commenced the conversation: "You look extremely well, my friend; I vow that I do not think I ever saw a better looking or more comely person: but how comes it about, I beseech you, that you should live so much better than I? I may say, without vanity, that I venture fifty times more than you do, and yet I am almost ready to perish with hunger." The Dog answered very bluntly, "Why,

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you may live as well, if you will do the same for it that I do."—"Indeed! What is that?" says he.—"Why," says the Dog, "only to guard the house a-nights, and keep it from thieves."—"With all my heart," replies the Wolf; "for at present I have but a sorry time of it; and I think that to change my hard lodging in the woods, where I endure rain, frost, and snow, for a warm roof over my head, for regular meals, and good food, will be no bad bargain."—"True," says the Dog; "therefore you have nothing more to do but to follow me." Now as they were jogging on together, the Wolf spied a crease in the Dog's neck, and, having a strange curiosity, could not forbear asking him what it meant. "Pooh! nothing," says the Dog.—"Nay, but pray!" says the Wolf.—"Why," says the Dog, "if you must know I am tied up in the daytime, because I am a little fierce, for fear I should bite people, and am only let loose a-nights. But this is done with a design to make me sleep a-days, more than anything else, and that I may watch the better in the night-time; for as soon as ever the twilight appears, out I am turned, and may go where I please. Then my master brings me plates of bones from the table with his own hands; and whatever scraps are left by any of the family, all fall to my share, for you must know I am a favourite with everybody. So you see how you are to live. Come, come along; what is the matter

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with you?"—"No," replied the Wolf, "I beg your pardon; keep your happiness all to yourself. Liberty is the word with me; and I would not be a king upon the terms you mention."

MORAL. A man may pay too dear for his whistle.

APPLICATION. Freedom is as essential to the Englishman as the air of heaven. It has long been the boast of our statesmen and people that the slave, by the act of placing his feet on English soil, is free. This passion for freedom is consistent with a love of order. Every man in a well-regulated community is limited in the freedom of his actions, to this extent —that he is prohibited from doing anything which may interfere with the liberty of his neighbour, True liberty, therefore, resolves itself into a submission to an equal public law, imposed on all, for the promotion of the general good. A universal obedience to this law is the best guarantee for the maintenance of true liberty. This union of liberty and law is attained by the ancient and t me-honoured constitutional government established in this land.

Think not that liberty
From order and religion e'er will dwell
Apart; companions they,
Of heavenly seed connate.

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It is not to be forgotten that the love of freedom has been made the pretext of great crimes by those who, as Milton expresses it, "mean *licence* when they cry *liberty*." Madame Roland spoke the truth when, ascending the scaffold of the guillotine, she clasped her hands, and, looking up at the statue of the supposed goddess of liberty which overlooked the place of execution, exclaimed, "O Liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

This fable has more reference to the question of domestic servitude than of public liberty. Its author knew from bitter experience the miseries of a servile condition, and teaches here that an ample provision for bodily wants is a poor compensation for the loss of personal freedom. The fable, amidst all the mutations of human society, admits of a perpetual application. It stimulates to self-exertion, and to a determination to be independent. The man dependent upon others, like the dog marked with the frettings of the collar, is always called upon to submit to some indignity, and is made to feel the yoke. He pays, in fact, too dear for his whistle.

> The love of liberty with life is given,
> And life itself, th' inferior gift of Heaven.

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FABLE XCIX.

THE WOOD AND THE CLOWN.

A WOODMAN came one day into a forest, and looked about him as if in search of something. The Trees, with a curiosity natural to some other creatures, asked him what he wanted. He replied, "Only a piece of Wood, to make a handle to my hatchet." Since that was all, it was voted unanimously that he should have a piece of good, sound, tough Ash. He had no sooner received it, and fitted it to his axe, than he began to lay about him, and to hack and hew without distinction, felling the noblest trees in all the forest. Then the Oak is said thus to have spoken to the Beech: "Brother, we must take it for our pains."

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MORAL. Let not your own conduct furnish a handle against yourself.

APPLICATION. How often do we hear it said, "that a man is his own worst enemy"! implying that the person alluded to furnishes those who are unfriendly to him with the means of speaking evil of him. He is guilty of dishonesty, or inattention to business, or forwardness of manner, or want of respect, or lack of temper, or of some other fault, which supplies to the ill-disposed an accusation against him. Such a one may find in this fable an admonition addressed to himself. It points out that little events may lead to great results, even as the loan of a sapling in the wood, for the handle of an axe, led to the demolition of the forest. It teaches men to examine well, lest they create a prejudice against themselves, and cause their good to be evil spoken of, and lest by their own conduct they furnish an excuse to those who desire, from some evil motive or other, to hinder their advancement and prosperity.

> The danger's much the same, on several shelves,
> If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

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FABLE C.

THE OLD LION.

A LION, worn out with age, lay fetching his last gasp, and agonizing in the convulsive struggles of death; upon which occasion, several of the beasts who had formerly been sufferers by him, came and revenged themselves upon him. The Boar, with his mighty tusks, drove at him in a stroke that glanced like lightning, and the Bull gored him with his violent horns; which, when the Ass saw they might do without any danger, he too came up, and threw his heels into the Lion's face;—upon which the poor old expiring tyrant uttered these words with his last dying groan: "Alas! how grievous it is to suffer

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insults, even from the brave and the valiant! but to be spurned by so base a creature as this is worse than dying ten thousand deaths."

MORAL. Respect thyself, and thou wilt win the respect of others.

APPLICATION. This fable affords as little pleasure to the reader as any contained in this collection. It is not, however, without its uses. The animals represented here as offering these painful indignities to the expiring Lion, are described as having been great sufferers, during his lifetime, from his rule and tyranny. They now, when they can do so with impunity, show their indignant sense of the treatment they had experienced. This conduct can by no means be approved or justified; for, under such circumstances, forgiveness of past injuries would have been the truest revenge. The fable, however, in its broad features, is designed to show that the best title of rulers to the respect of the people whom they govern must be founded on their actions; and that they best conciliate the affections of their subjects by equitable government, an impartial administration of justice, and a preservation of the liberties of the nation. They who most respect themselves, best insure the respect of others.

The fable also enforces a lesson of general utility.

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It shows, if any man would have in later life those compensations—

> Which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

he must earn them by a virtuous youth, a useful manhood, and a well-spent life.

> Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

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FABLE CI.

THE HORSE AND THE LOADED ASS.

AN idle Horse and an Ass labouring under a heavy burden were travelling the road together; they both belonged to a country fellow who trudged it on foot by them. The Ass, ready to faint under his heavy load, entreated the Horse to assist him, and lighten his burden by taking some of it upon his back. The Horse was ill-natured, and refused to do it; upon which the poor Ass tumbled down in the midst of the highway, and expired in an instant. The countryman, discovering that his Ass was dead, ungirthed his pack-saddle, laid it, with all its burden, upon the Horse, and added to it the skin of the dead

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Ass; so that the Horse, by his moroseness in refusing to do a small kindness, justly brought upon himself a greater inconvenience.

MORAL. A small unkindness is a great offence.

APPLICATION. A disobliging temper carries with it its own punishment, and generally produces unhappiness to its possessor. The design of the fable is to teach sympathy with the needs and necessities of our neighbours, and to enjoin the duty of relieving them to the best of our ability, especially in cases in which we know that the applicants for our assistance are doing their best, like the laden Ass in this narrative, to help themselves. Under the influence of this admonition, we should learn to avoid a spirit of selfishness, and should exert ourselves, as opportunities may allow, to lighten the sorrows and to alleviate the distresses of those who are less blessed than we are with the gifts of health, fortune, and worldly prosperity.

To each his sufferings; all are men,
Condemned alike to groan;
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.

E'en he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly need the generous tear he pays.

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FABLE CII.

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH.

A POOR, feeble Old Man, who had crawled out into a neighbouring wood to gather a few sticks, had made up his bundle, and, laying it on his shoulders, was trudging homeward with it. Wearied with age and the length of the way and the weight of his burden, he grew so faint and weak, that he sunk under it, and, as he sat on the ground, called upon Death to come once for all and ease him of his troubles. Death no sooner heard him but he came,

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and demanded what he wanted. The poor Old Man, who little thought Death had been so near, and was frighted out of his senses at his terrible aspect, answered him, trembling: "That having, by some mishap, let fall his bundle of sticks, and being too infirm to get them by himself on his shoulder, he had made bold to call on him to help. This, indeed, was all he wanted."

MORAL. Men weary of life desire to live from fear of death.

APPLICATION. This fable gives a true picture of the general behaviour of mankind towards that grim King of Terrors, Death. Some men are so impatient of any misfortune which ruffles the even current of their lives, that they immediately wish to die. But let the disease show serious symptoms of proving fatal, and their mind is changed. Their only supplication is then for a longer span of life, and that they may be spared to have their old burdens laid again upon their shoulders. He is the happiest man who, hoping for the pardon of the past through the merits of a Saviour, and conscious of efforts to conquer evil through the agency of a Divine influence co-operating with his exertions for self-amendment, is resigned to all the events of life, and equally

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abstains from either a desire for, or a fear of, the approach of death.

Lord, mend, or rather make us; one creation
Will not suffice our turn:
Except Thou make us daily, we shall spurn
Our own salvation.

No heart in which was healthful breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

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FABLE CIII.

THE BOAR AND THE ASS.

AN Ass decked out with a fine saddle and a bridle adorned with ribbons, as he was going to a neighbouring fair, happened to meet a stately Boar, and having a mind to make fun of him, addressed him thus: "Brother, I am your humble servant." The boar, somewhat nettled at this address from an Ass, bristled up to him, and telling him that he was surprised to hear him speak with so much familiarity, and to utter an untruth, threatened to rip him up in a moment; but, wisely stifling his resentment, he contented himself with only saying: "Go, you foolish fellow; I could be amply and easily revenged on you; but I

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do not care to soil my tusks with the blood of so ignoble a creature."

MORAL. Scoffs have not rewards, but disdain.

APPLICATION. There are persons to be met with in society who seek every opportunity of making jokes on all whom they meet. These jests generally consist in remarks on the names, habits, or peculiarities of the persons addressed, and are more generally remarkable for their impertinence than for their wit. Dr. Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, well describes the character of these persons. "They take," he says, "to use the language of Shakespeare, as large a charter as the winds to blow on whom they please. Friends, neuters, enemies, without distinction, are the objects of their cruel sport, and lie within the mercy of their wit. Their wit and genius, indeed, extends no further than to sport with more honourable feelings, to emit a frothy kind of humour, to break a puny pun or a licentious jest; for in every other kind of conversation they are dry, barren, stramineous, dull, and heavy: and, indeed, they ever forget that

> A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him who hears it; never in the tongue
> Of him that utters it."

Personal jests may fly lightly from the mouth; but

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they make deep and sore wounds, especially if they proceed from the tongue of a presumed friend. This fable teaches that those who are disposed to be facetious and jocular should keep within the limits of becoming mirth, and be careful not to indulge in remarks tending to raise a laugh at the expense of another's comfort. These foolish jesters are in most cases unworthy of resentment. The best reproof is to treat them, after the example of the Boar in this fable, with silent and dignified contempt.

Wise men, ever cautious, weigh
That which they may have to say.

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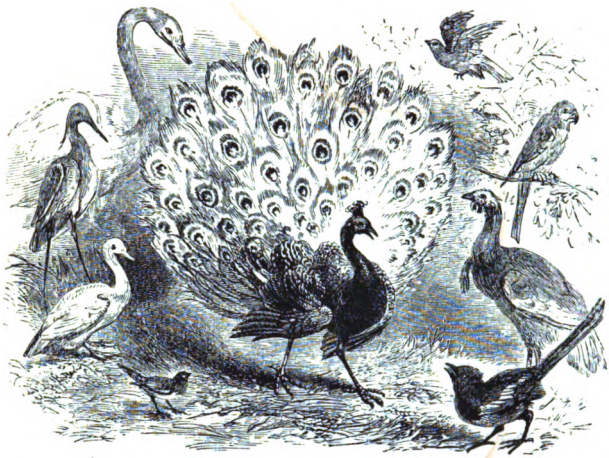

FABLE CIV.

THE PEACOCK AND THE MAGPIE.

THE Birds met together to elect a king. The Peacock avowed himself a candidate for the throne, and displayed his gaudy plumes with the view of obtaining the votes of the multitude by the richness of his feathers. The majority declared for him, and clapped their wings in token of applause. But just as they were going to proclaim him, the Magpie stepped forth into the midst of the assembly, and addressed himself thus to the new king: "May it please your majesty elect to permit one of your unworthy subjects to represent to you his suspicions and apprehensions in the face of this audience? We

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have chosen you for our king, we are about to put our lives and fortunes into your hands, and our whole hope and dependence will be upon you; if, therefore, the eagle, the vulture, or the kite should at any time make a descent upon us, as it is highly probable they will, may your majesty be so gracious as to dispel our fears and clear our doubts about that matter by letting us know how you intend to defend us against them?" This pithy, unanswerable question drew the whole audience into so just a reflection, that they soon resolved to annul their choice, and not to receive the Peacock as their king.

MORAL. Follow not the multitude to do evil.

APPLICATION. The institution of an hereditary monarchy saves our country from all the perils of personal ambition, endless heart-burnings, and perpetual cabals, which are proved by experience to attach themselves to an elective ruler. Whilst our government thus gains strength and stability by its chief executive minister being entirely removed from all fears of rivals or competitors, the liberties of the state and the general good administration of affairs are cemented and secured by the people having a vote in the election of their own representatives to the great council of the nation, and a voice in the nomination of their respective local and municipal

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authorities. The constituencies, whether of parliamentary or municipal electors, should not be deluded into accepting the candidates who make the greatest parade of wealth, or who most indulge in declamation. They should honour with their choice those who, by local knowledge, sound experience, excellent judgment, and established reputation, may be most capable of advancing the welfare of the community. This is the moral to be deduced from the fable. The assembly of Birds would have chosen the showy and specious, but vain and useless, Peacock for their king. The multitude, after the same example, are at all times disposed to judge by the flattering words, clap-trap speeches, and attractive appearance, rather than to weigh the real merits, or to consider the fitness and qualifications, of the candidates for their favour.

Nor is the people's judgment always true;
The most may err as greatly as the few.

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FABLE CV.

THE FORESTER AND THE LION.

A FORESTER meeting with a Lion, a dispute arose as to which was the stronger. The Forester, in support of his argument, pointed to a statue in the forest, representing Hercules bestriding the vanquished Lion. "If this," says the Lion, "is all you have to say, let us be the carvers, and we will make the Lion vanquish the Man."

MORAL. No one is a fair witness in his own cause.

APPLICATION. Nothing is more difficult than to ascertain the exact truth of statements dependent for their verification on human testimony. It is extra-

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ordinary to observe how very differently two credible and disinterested witnesses are impressed with an event transacted before their eyes. Without the least intention to deceive, the one may omit circumstances mentioned by the other; so that a casuist or objector may with ease establish an inconsistency in their statements, and deduce therefrom reasons for refusing an assent to their respective narrations. This same anomaly is still more apparent in the records of history. An impartial student will have the greatest difficulty in arriving at the truth. Events are so distorted by party zeal, or by religious animosities; individual characters are so blackened by one set of annalists, and so lauded by another,—that it amounts almost to an impossibility to hold the balance between them. By the same infirmity of human nature, a judge is prohibited from giving judgment in his own cause; and a man is suspected when a witness in his own case.

This fable sets forth the natural partiality shown by every man for his own side of any question, and cautions us to weigh well the evidence to be alleged for or against a matter before we arrive at a final and irrevocable decision. The tendency to exaggeration exhibited by the Forester too often terminates in the ridicule and discomfiture of the boaster.

> All seems infected that th' infected spy,
> As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

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FABLE CVI.

THE LION IN LOVE.

THE Lion, when he finished his dispute with the Forester, saw his fair daughter, and immediately fell in love with her, and at once demanded her hand of the Forester, that he might make her his queen. The Forester was much perplexed at the proposal. He was alike unwilling to part with his daughter or to offend the Lion. He hit upon this expedient: he told the Lion that he would consent upon these conditions,—that he must agree to have his teeth drawn

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out and his claws cut off, lest he should hurt her, or lest she should be frightened of him. The Lion assented; but was no sooner deprived of his teeth and claws, than the Forester attacked him with a huge club, and killed him.

MORAL. Untimely love produces misery.

APPLICATION. Love is the most universal of all sentiments. It visits alike the old and the young, the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple. When resulting in marriage, it is the herald of increased happiness or the precursor of untold misery.

> Marriage is with us
> The holiest ordinance of God: whereon
> The bliss or bane of human life depends.
> Love must be won by love, and heart by heart
> Linked in mysterious sympathy, before
> We pledge the married vow: and some there are
> Who hold that, ere we enter into life,
> Soul hath with soul been mated, each for each
> Especially ordained.

This fable is well calculated to teach us that so important an event as marriage, on which the happiness of a life depends, ought not to be enterprised or taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, wantonly, but in a spirit of caution, and of affection founded on sufficient

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knowledge and mutual respect; so that there be no after sorrow, nor late repentance.

May Heaven so smile upon this holy act,
That after hours with sorrow chide us not!

Love, like the bee, its sweets can bring;
Love, like the bee too, leaves its sting.

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FABLE CVII.

THE STAG DRINKING AT THE POOL.

A STAG, drinking at a pool which reflected his shadow in its clear water, began to regard his shape with much admiration. "Ah," says he, "what a glorious pair of horns are there! How gracefully do these antlers adorn my forehead! Would that my feet were only fair as my antlered brow!" While he was thus meditating, he was startled by the sound of the huntsmen and hounds. Away he flies, and, using his nimble feet, soon distanced his enemies. But shortly after, entering a dense copse, his horns became entangled in the branches, the hounds overtook him, and pulled him down. "Unhappy creature that I

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am!" he exclaimed; "I find those horns, on which I prided myself, to be the cause of my undoing; and those limbs that I despised might have secured my safety."

MORAL. Beauty may have fair leaves, yet bitter fruit.

APPLICATION. Peace has her victories,
No less renowned than war.

The saying may be as faithfully referred to the power of beauty. It always has, and ever will have, its triumphs. The records of all history bear attestation to its wide-spread and powerful influence. Every heart acknowledges its power; but, at the same time, the possession of beauty is a dangerous gift. Unassociated with that prudence which is its best safeguard, and severed from that virtue which is necessary to its honourable reputation, it becomes a snare and a source of misery. Such is the moral to be deduced from this fable. The Stag lost his life as a sacrifice to those antlers which excited admiration from himself and others; while the limbs which he despised might have insured his safety.

Beauty is an idle boast:
To day it's yours; to-morrow, lost.

A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower—
Lost, faded, broken, dead within an hour.

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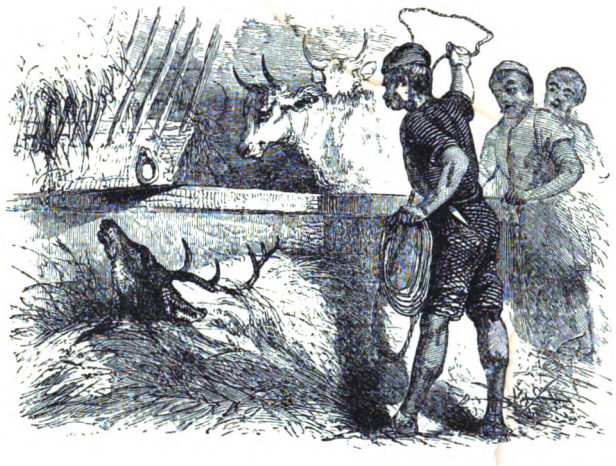

FABLE CVIII.

THE STAG IN THE OX-STALL.

A STAG, roused out of his covert in the forest, and driven hard by the hounds, made towards a farmhouse, and, seeing the door of an Ox-stall open, entered therein, and hid himself under a heap of straw. One of the oxen, turning his head about, asked him what he meant by venturing himself in a place where he was sure to meet with his doom. "Ah!" says the Stag, "if you will not betray me, I shall do well enough; I intend to make off again the first opportunity." Well, he stayed there till, towards night, in came the herdsman with a bundle of fodder, and never saw him. In short, all the servants

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of the farm came and went, and not a soul of them found him out. Nay, the bailiff himself came and looked in, but walked away no wiser than the rest. Upon this the Stag began to return thanks to the good-natured oxen, protesting that they were the most obliging people he had ever met with. After he had paid his compliments, one of them answered him gravely, "Indeed, we desire nothing more than to have it in our power to contribute to your escape; but there is a certain person you little think of, who has a hundred eyes; if he should happen to come, I would not give a straw for your life." In the mean while, the master himself came home from a neighbour's, and, because he had observed the cattle to fall off in their condition of late, he went up to the rack, and said aloud, "Why did they not give them more fodder?" Then casting his eyes downward, "Hey-day!" says he; "why so sparing of the litter? more is wanted here. And these cobwebs—but I have spoken so often, that unless I do it myself," —thus, as he went on prying into everything, he chanced to look where the Stag's horns lay sticking out of the straw; upon which he raised a hue and cry, called all his people about him, killed the poor Stag, and made a prize of him.

MORAL. The eye of the master does more than all his servants.

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APPLICATION. This fable lies within the comprehension of the simplest readers. Its moral is intended to show the difference between the superintendence of the master and the oversight of the servant. The one will see a thousand faults which will altogether escape the observation of the other. The following amusing stories will exemplify the meaning of the author of this fable. A fat man riding upon a lean horse was asked how it came to pass that he was so fat, and the beast that carried him so lean. He replied, "Because I feed myself; but my servant feeds my horse." Again: A farmer once told a wise man that he was daily becoming poorer. Whereupon the wise man gave him a casket, with the strict injunction of taking it daily into his kitchen, garden, storehouse, vineyard, cellar, stable, and fields; and then, on the condition of his not opening the casket till the end of the year, promised him wealth correspondent to his wishes. The farmer obeyed implicity the commands imposed on him. In the kitchen, he found the cook wasting the meat; in the cellar, the vats leaking; in the garden, the vegetables unhoed; in the stable, the horses starved of their food. All these disorders were remedied by the daily inspection of the owner; and by the year's end the farmer's fortunes were retrieved. The soil on the shoe of the owner is the best manure for his land. The master's eye makes the horse

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fat. Stirring masters make a rich household. He who trusts to others to plough his land, will have his fields untilled.

The eye of the master enricheth the hutch,
The eye of the mistress availeth as much—
Which eye, if it governs with reason and skill,
Hath servant and service at pleasure and will.

Happy is he whom sun and lamp sees one ;
Who's honest still, though witness there be none.

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FABLE CIX.

THE DOVE AND THE ANT.

THE Ant, compelled by thirst, went to drink in a clear, purling rivulet; but the current, with its circling eddy, snatched her away, and carried her down the stream. A Dove, pitying her distressed condition, cropped a branch from a neighbouring tree, and let it fall into the water; by means of which the Ant saved herself, and got ashore. Not long after, a fowler, having a design upon the Dove, planted his nets in due order, without the bird observing what he was about; which the Ant perceiving, just as he was going to put his design into execution, she bit him by the heel, and made him

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give so sudden a start that the dove took the alarm, and flew away.

MORAL. Kindness begets kindness

APPLICATION. Gratitude, when truly experienced, is the most influential of all motives. The higher principled the man, the more susceptible he is of the powerful operations of this sentiment. The grateful man realizes within his breast a threefold cord of obligation. He is thankful for mercies to the Giver of all good, and seeks by a greater devotion to His service to repay

His debt immense of endless gratitude.

He is grateful to his earthly benefactor, and will exert himself to the utmost to show his sense of kindnesses received. He is stirred up in his own heart to bestow benefits in his turn on all within his reach. Thus kindness begets kindness. A grateful sense of mercies received leads to the extension of mercies to others. The fable teaches this lesson, and shows how the spirit of gratitude is a fruitful and operative influence, inducing the repayment of blessing by blessing, and causing one good turn to produce another.

Their perfume lost, aye to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.

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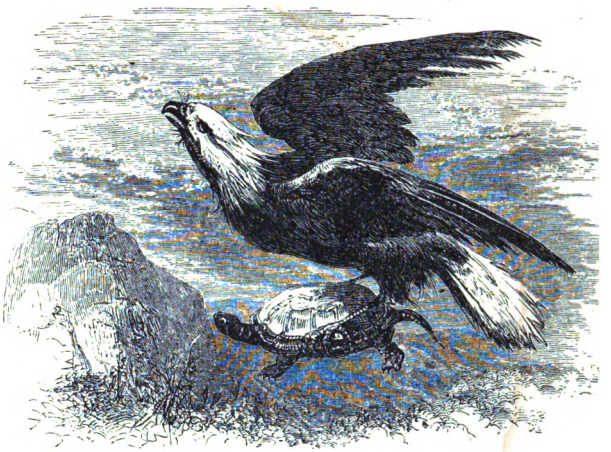

FABLE CX.

THE TORTOISE AND EAGLE.

A TORTOISE, anxious to change his lot on earth, by which he was confined to keep the ground, and desirous to explore the wonders of the air and sky, gave notice that if any bird would take him up in the air, and show him the world, he would reward him with a discovery of many precious stones which he knew to be hidden in a certain cavern of the earth. The Eagle undertook to gratify his wish on the promise of the reward. When he had been lifted up to an immense height, he demanded to know where the promised jewels were concealed; and when he found that the Tortoise could not tell, he suddenly

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let him fall, and he was dashed to pieces upon a rock, when the Eagle made a rich feast on him.

MORAL. Never make promises you are unable to perform.

APPLICATION. The promise made by any one beyond the power of his performance is accompanied with a twofold injury. It wounds alike the giver and the receiver of the promise. He to whom the promise is made is led to entertain false hopes, and it may be even to enter into arrangements and to make plans, on the assurance given him; and he must experience pain and disappointment on the failure of his expectations. He who makes the promise, and is not able to fulfil its conditions, injures his own reputation as a man of integrity and honour, and rightly merits any painful consequences in which he may be involved by his breach of faith. The fable teaches that a rightly principled man will consider well before he gives his word, and, having done so, he will allow no exertion to fail him in securing its entire and effectual fulfilment.

Count never well gotten that naughty is got,
Nor well to account of which honest is not.

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